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ABSTRACT

The significance of permanent education and correspondence education for each other is obvious. As educational provision of the traditional type has expanded, so has the demand for education. One feature which most correspondence education systems have in common is that they cater mainly for adults. This survey attempts to assess the present situation in this field in the member States of the Council of Europe. It is based on information supplied by the member States. The significant elements only in the various national systems are presented. Statistics are not presented in standardized format. The report follows the particular characteristic of correspondence education, namely, its orientation toward its clients. The deductive approach is used. Chapter II identifies the correspondence. Chapter III considers the institutions which exist to meet the needs expressed by the clients. Chapter IV deals with the educational methods employed by these institutions and traces the development of educational methodology in this field. Matters of external control and assessment are treated in Chapter V. In Chapter VI, some possible future developments are outlined. In particular, this last chapter deals with the growth of international bodies concerned to standardize practices and raise the level of professionalism in the correspondence field. (Author/CK)

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the place of education
by correspondence
in permanent education

COUNCIL
FOR
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CO-OPERATION

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1970

The Council of Europe was established by ten nations on 5 May 1949, since when its membership has progressively increased to eighteen. Its aim is "to achieve a greater unity between its Members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress". This aim is pursued by discussion of questions of common concern and by agreements and common action in economic, social, cultural, scientific, legal and administrative matters.

The Council for Cultural Co-operation was set up by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 1 January 1962 to draw up proposals for the cultural policy of the Council of Europe, to co-ordinate and give effect to the overall cultural programme of the organisation and to allocate the resources of the Cultural Fund. It is assisted by three permanent committees of senior officials: for higher education and research, for general and technical education and for out-of-school education. All the member governments of the Council of Europe, together with Spain, the Holy See and Finland which have acceded to the European Cultural Convention, are represented on these bodies¹.

In educational matters, the aim of the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CCC) is to help to create conditions in which the right educational opportunities are available to young Europeans whatever their background or level of academic accomplishment, and to facilitate their adjustment to changing political and social conditions. This entails in particular a greater rationalisation of the complex educational process. Attention is paid to all influences bearing on the acquisition of knowledge, from home television to advanced research; from the organisation of youth centres to the improvement of teacher training. The countries concerned will thereby be able to benefit from the experience of their neighbours in the planning and reform of structures, curricula and methods in all branches of education.

Since 1963 the CCC has been publishing in English and French, a series of works of general interest entitled "Education in Europe", which record the results of expert studies and intergovernmental investigations conducted within the framework of its programme. A list of these publications will be found at the end of this volume.

These works are being supplemented by a series of "companion volumes" of a more specialised nature, including catalogues, handbooks, bibliographies etc., as well as selected reports of meetings and studies on more technical subjects. These publications, to which the present study belongs, are listed at the end of this volume.

The opinions expressed in these studies are not to be regarded as reflecting the policy of individual governments or of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

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1. For complete list, see back of cover.

**COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

**THE PLACE OF EDUCATION
BY CORRESPONDENCE
IN PERMANENT EDUCATION**

A study of correspondence education in the member States
of the Council of Europe

by

Professor E.G. WEDELL

**STRASBOURG
1970**

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PREFACE

This survey of correspondence education in Europe is the work of several people. It is based on reports submitted on behalf of the member States of the Council for Cultural Co-operation. I am much indebted to those who prepared the original submissions, mainly in 1967 and 1968, and to those who brought them up to date early in 1970.

I am also grateful for the material and the views made available to me on behalf of the organisations which in various ways try to co-ordinate the work of correspondence colleges in Europe, The European Council for Correspondence Education, The European Home Study Council and the Council for the Promotion of Education by Correspondence.

Some of the early work of collation was undertaken by Monsieur Ach of the University of Strasbourg and Monsieur Cros of the French *Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale*. I wish to acknowledge here my debt to them.

Last, but not least, I am grateful for the help given by the Secretariat of the Council of Europe. Their co-operation enabled me to obtain up-to-date information from most of the member States.

I.

INTRODUCTION

Education by correspondence is a sector of educational provision which evokes among educational experts very varying responses. In some countries it has for many years formed part of the public educational system; in others it has developed largely as a result of private enterprise and provided for those left out of public provision.

As the educational systems in most European countries have grown and developed since the second world war it might have been expected that correspondence education would wither away, particularly in those countries in which it had traditionally been regarded as a substitute for formal face-to-face teaching. The contrary has, however, been the case. As educational provision of the traditional type has expanded, so has the demand for education. Thus all forms of provision have had to face an increased demand, and correspondence education is no exception.

The renewed interest in correspondence education is, however, not due solely to the demand for a larger quantity of education. It also arises from the recognition that traditional face-to-face methods in formal institutional settings are not the only, or even in all cases the best, forms of education. Correspondence education, being flexible in its application and convenient for the student wishing to study alongside his normal occupation or employment, has qualities which are of growing significance at a time when the educational process is ceasing to be seen merely as a process of induction. The emergence of the concept of permanent education requires new thinking about the nature of educational provision throughout the life span.

It is therefore no accident that the concept of permanent education has been linked in the title of this report with the concept of correspondence education. The significance of the one for the other is obvious. And it is in this context that the renewed interest, particularly on the part of governments, in correspondence education must be seen.

Definition of terms

Permanent education is not merely adult education or popular education. It includes the earlier stages of the educational process and recognises that optimal use can be expected from educational investment in men and money only if the different stages of education are integrated. Thus it involves the reconsideration of the purposes of primary and secondary education in the light of the fact that those who participate in these stages will not only continue their education into the immediate post-school stage, but will have opportunities for educational refreshment and advancement at later stages in the life span.

Further and higher education are also affected by the concept of permanent education. The proportion of an age group continuing into these sectors of education is growing continually. It is likely that it will increase from the traditional figure of between 5 % and 10 % to nearer 25 % - 30 %. The burden which this imposes on an educational system already under heavy strain owing to the population explosion and the extension of the compulsory school age in many countries is considerable. Educational expenditure has been increasing at an exponential rate. It is now in many countries one of the largest single items in the national budget. Accordingly the pressures for the containment of increases in educational expenditure are expected to increase at the very time when demand for education from all sections of the population is growing.

The only possibility of reconciling these two sets of pressures will be the achievement of a reduction in the unit cost of education. Such a reduction should not of course involve a reduction in the quality of education: quite the contrary. Educational standards in Europe generally are high, but there is no room for complacency. It is by the exploitation of new techniques, by the maximisation of resources and by establishment of a flexible relationship between public and private expenditure on education that the means can be found to expand education at the pace at which it should grow while at the same time moderating its reliance on public finance.

It is in this context that *correspondence education* gains a new significance. But correspondence education is no longer a term which can be defined in simple terms. Increasingly the traditional element in correspondence education, that is the sending of an ordered sequence of lessons to students through the post with or without opportunities for the correction of exercises returned by the student, is being replaced by more elaborate arrangements combining a number of teaching and learning facilities. This multi-media approach has become possible partly by the expansion of the media of mass communication and partly by the extension of the methodological basis of long-distance study.

Many combinations of media are used. The French system distinguishes mainly between long-distance tuition accompanied by radio or

television programmes on the one hand, and long-distance tuition combined with face-to-face tuition on the other¹ *. The Open University in the United Kingdom expects to combine all three of these elements with a fourth: short periods of residence by its students in the course of each year². Other combinations are being developed in other countries.

One feature which most correspondence education systems have in common is that they cater mainly for adults. These adults are often young, but they have completed their compulsory schooling. Children of school age do use correspondence courses, particularly in subjects which may not be provided at their schools. But such use is usually of a different order from its use by adults, since it supplements, rather than replaces, the classroom situation.

Features of the survey

This survey attempts to assess the present situation in this field in the member States of the Council of Europe. It is important to emphasise a number of features of the survey, so that those who read it may not be disappointed. The first is that it is concerned with the situation as it *is*, not as it might or should be. In chapter VI on Future Developments certain possible lines of development are sketched in, which arise from the comments and aspirations expressed in the contributions from member States. But these are tentative and commit none but the author.

The second feature of the survey is that it is based on information supplied by the member States. This information was originally sought in 1967, and the questions were formulated in general terms. This naturally led to a set of replies which vary widely both in volume and in their comprehensiveness. Although I arranged for a follow-up enquiry to be sent by the Council of Europe early in 1970, there was no time to do more than to ask member States to bring up to date the information which they had originally submitted. The report therefore is based on some very full and complete reports; on some reports which appear to do less than justice to the correspondence situation in their respective countries; and the report has to omit altogether specific reference to one or two countries such as Belgium and Eire, from which no information was obtained.

Thirdly, the material requested by the Council of Europe did not include a standard form for the presentation of statistics. Nor would the majority of countries concerned have been able to provide the answers, since national statistics are in most cases very patchy. Thus the statistical material provided is very sketchy and it has been all but impossible to collate this in a form which may be both relevant and reliable.

* See References on page 91.

From the limited statistics which were supplied by member States it is clear that the extent to which information about correspondence education is available at national level is often very limited. Many governments do not know what is going on in this field in their countries. Even those that have some information find it difficult to complete this because of the large element of private enterprise involved in the provision of courses.

Lastly, the size of this report has had to be severely limited. The material which has been assembled, incomplete as it is, would have permitted much more extensive treatment than is possible within the format of 120 pages. The Council of Europe has published separately two of the more significant national contributions, those from France and Sweden³. It is not intended to publish other national contributions. As far as possible, the most significant elements in the various national systems are included in this report.

The lay-out of the report

The report follows, in the disposition of the material, the particular characteristic of correspondence education, namely its orientation toward its clients. Particularly in the private sector correspondence education has had to develop a sensitivity to the needs and interests of its clients in order to survive. This has not always been a characteristic of publicly provided education, which has derived much of its orientation from the needs of the community as defined by those controlling the educational system at any given moment.

The report therefore uses the deductive approach. Chapter II is concerned to identify the correspondence student. Who is he? Where does he live? Why does he undertake correspondence study? It tries to answer these questions and to derive from the answers the social, economic and cultural patterns which gave rise to the use of the correspondence method and which sustain it at the present time.

Chapter III considers the institutions which exist to meet the needs expressed by the clients; the correspondence schools, public and private, some providing general education, others courses related to a particular field of study or a particular profession. It contains some analysis of the structures of these institutions and of their organisation and management, as well as their financial arrangements.

Chapter IV deals with the educational methods employed by these institutions and by those such as the mass media with whom they may collaborate. It traces the development of educational methodology in this field.

Matters of external control and assessment are treated in chapter V. As correspondence education undergoes a revival, increasing interest is being taken in it by governments anxious to harness it to the public

educational system. Thus the control of the institutions providing correspondence education and of the quality of their provision is becoming a matter of public interest. Legislative and administrative arrangements are being made creating both voluntary and compulsory machinery for the maintenance of these standards. The relationship of correspondence courses to public examinations is likewise becoming a matter of growing concern as the number of students wishing to qualify by this means increases. This aspect is also discussed in the chapter.

In chapter VI some possible future developments are outlined. In particular the chapter deals with the growth of international bodies concerned to standardise practices and raise the level of professionalism in the correspondence field.

II.

THE CORRESPONDENCE STUDENT

The correspondence student has traditionally been the determiner of the nature of correspondence education. This type of provision developed in response to certain needs which could not be, or at least were not, met by other sectors of the educational system. Although at the present time, as we shall see, correspondence education is being developed by a number of countries ahead of declared need and in pursuit of comprehensive educational policies, even there the presence of a potential group of users large enough to make provision viable is essential for success.

Thus it is wise to begin with the client, the user of correspondence education, and to relate judgments of provision to him and to his needs. This anthropocentric approach is particularly appropriate because the vast majority of correspondence students are adults, who are not only capable of deciding for themselves the volume and nature of the education in which they wish to engage, but are also far less captive an audience than are children of statutory school age. The freedom of adults to choose is of course also limited by the range of provision which is available to them. One of the complaints often raised about correspondence education is that much of it flourishes in spite of its indifferent quality because the general levels is low and students therefore do not have a choice between good and bad material. There is also a good deal of discussion among the commercial colleges about the financial arrangements and the period of notice required before a student can "vote with his feet" and discontinue a course. If a whole year's fees have to be paid at the beginning of a course and there is no provision for the repayment of fees in the case of dissatisfaction, then the student is bound to his college to that extent. But in spite of all these limitations on his freedom, the adult correspondence student shares with all other adult students the basic freedom of choice: whether to pursue a particular type of study or not. What are the factors which cause him to choose correspondence study?

The geographical factor

Why does he engage in this type of education? The reasons may be grouped in various ways. Superficially the most obvious reason is the absence of an institution capable of providing face-to-face tuition in the subject he wishes to study. This suggests that correspondence education should flourish in countries with widely scattered populations. The evidence, such as it is, suggests this hypothesis. Curiously the evidence does not support the converse, i.e. that correspondence education does *not* flourish in areas where distances between urban centres are small.

The case for geographical determinism is supported by the difference in the status of correspondence education between *Denmark* on the one hand (a small country with a concentrated population) and *Norway* and *Sweden* on the other (both of which are very large with scattered populations). As the evidence from *Denmark* makes clear "Correspondence instruction is not generally considered a fully acceptable educational method... The reasons for this fact are... that a few correspondence schools throughout the years have employed exorbitant business methods and that no real demand for correspondence tuition ever existed in *Denmark*."⁴ The absence of demand appears to have resulted in an absence of interest on the part of the public educational system, which in turn led to unregulated private enterprise in the field, which in turn gave correspondence education a bad name.

In *Norway* and *Sweden* the position is quite different. "Norway with its 3.7 million inhabitants is twice as large as England with its 47 million. 24 % of the country consists of forests, 72 % of mountains and glaciers. The sailing distance from Oslo around the coast to the far North is the same as that to North Africa. This... is one of the reasons why education by correspondence has played and still plays an important part in Norwegian education."⁵ Moreover, correspondence education has been regulated by Act of Parliament since 1948. Similar circumstances in *Sweden* contributed to the early development of correspondence education there.

As I pointed out, the geographical argument cannot, however, be regarded as conclusive. Correspondence education also flourishes in countries where distances are quite small, such as the *Netherlands*. The *Netherlands* is one of the countries in which correspondence education is most highly developed. The country covers "a small area with a very high population density, every part of the country was within easy reach of formal oral education. This situation of a widespread good school education formed an excellent foundation on which education by correspondence could, right from the start, find full scope at a higher level... the first schools for correspondence education were founded with the purpose of providing training for officially qualified teachers wishing to gain higher certificates. This teacher training was so good that the students who had passed the State examinations for which these courses

were intended were appointed at senior high schools and were taken as equal to university people. This state of affairs still continues and has now existed for over 50 years." ⁶ The ambivalence of the geographical argument is further illustrated by the disposition of the correspondence students in the *Netherlands*. 59.9 % of these live either in the three largest cities or in the three most densely populated provinces of the country which together account for only 47.2 % of the total population ⁷. Thus correspondence education is not a device used, for the lack of anything better, by students who live out of reach of face-to-face tuition.

The comparatively small part played by geographical distance from suitable educational establishments in undertaking correspondence education is also borne out by the *French* evidence, at least that from the *Centre National de Télé-Enseignement*. The Centre itself had in 1968 about 80,000 students. To these must be added about 60,000 students enrolled in regional centres established in certain districts in order to decentralise the programme. The student body at that time was distributed among the various reasons for enrolment as follows:

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Health	8
Residing too far from school/college	16
Military service	9
Art studies additional to general studies	2
Supplementary education required	16.5
Persons in full-time employment	48.5
	100.0 ¹⁹

The *French* evidence does not state why those in full-time employment found it more satisfactory to undertake study by correspondence than by face-to-face methods at nearby institutions. It may well be that for the majority a suitable institution did not exist within convenient distance. This would strengthen the geographical factor beyond the significance which it is given in the table.

It may, on the other hand, be that the French students, like a recent British sample, found that part-time study by correspondence is easier to combine with full-time employment than other types of part-time study. "The decision to study by correspondence appears to be the outcome of positive expectations about features of the correspondence method. Other considerations, such as the occupational and domestic circumstances of the students, were secondary to this." ²⁰ The positive

expectations included the avoidance of time-wasting journeys to and from an educational institution after a day's work; the freedom to order one's study times more conveniently; and the freedom to work at one's own pace rather than at that suited to a group of students including a wide range of ability.

There is, however, an exception to the evidence minimising the geographical factor. As one would expect, it applies to the case of agricultural and horticultural studies. This is the only group of subjects taught by correspondence in the *Netherlands* which has a larger recruitment in the rural parts of the country than in the urban. Obvious though this may seem, this evidence adds a new dimension to the identification of the reason for correspondence study: the professional one. It is apparent that the majority of correspondence students in Holland study subjects, the application of which is in urban rather than rural areas. Thus such students are more likely to be found in urban areas.

The Dutch findings are supported by a British study of correspondence students undertaken in the University of Manchester which found that "nearly half the students in the sample concerned lived in the South-Eastern region of *England* (the most densely populated part of the country) and more than one quarter of the total within the Greater London County boundary"⁸.

Some figures from *Switzerland* are less conclusive. Whereas 20.5 % of the population in 1960 lived in large towns only 14.6 % of correspondence students lived there. Conversely the rural areas containing 58 % of the population accounted for 62.8 % of correspondence enrolments. The Swiss memorandum points out, however, that "it would be wrong to believe that town-dwellers greatly prefer to go to evening classes, which are more readily available to them, or that the large majority of correspondence enrolments are by people living in the countryside, where there are fewer educational facilities. The differences are in fact slight. In the small towns which have grown up in recent years (such as the satellite towns) the number of correspondence students is very high."⁹

German evidence supports the British and Dutch material. "There is little doubt that the manifold requirements of industry are the main reasons for the following percentage distribution:

<i>Nature of place of residence</i>	<i>Percentage of correspondence students</i>
Village	12
Small town	32
Medium-sized town	16
City	40 " ¹⁰

A pattern is therefore beginning to emerge from the evidence. Geographical factors are not of overriding importance, although the diffusion of a population over large areas has tended to make governments more conscious of the uses of correspondence education. In countries with more concentrated populations the type of subject offered appears to be of greater importance. Since the majority of subjects in which correspondence courses are offered are related to industry and commerce, which proceed in an urban setting, it is from this type of setting that the majority of correspondence students have tended to come. Where, as in *Holland* (but curiously not in another highly developed agricultural country such as *Denmark*), farming is intensively undertaken, and courses in agricultural and horticultural subjects are provided, these recruit well in rural areas.

Occupational needs and objectives

The discussion of the importance of the geographical factor in causing students to undertake correspondence education has shown that occupational needs and interests are of equal if not greater importance. The wish to "get on" in life appears in all countries to be a powerful motivation to undertake correspondence education. The fact that this wish has to be met by means of correspondence usually means that those concerned are prevented, largely by economic circumstances, from developing their talents through full-time study. But this statement also has to be qualified, since in a number of occupations access to professional recognition can be gained only by a combination of theoretical and practical studies.

Thus in the *United Kingdom* it is generally the rule rather than the exception that bank employees, surveyors, accountants and similar professions require a period of on-the-job practical training combined with theoretical study before they are granted the diploma of their respective professions. This being so, correspondence education is usually recognised as an integral part of professional preparation since this can be combined most conveniently with the practical doing of the job. The required standards of achievement are set by the professional body concerned and these determine the syllabus. In some cases the professional bodies themselves provide correspondence courses; in the majority of cases, however, these are provided by one or more commercial correspondence colleges.

But occupational needs and objectives are often of a more general type than can be satisfied by preparation for a particular professional qualification. The list of subjects in which correspondence education is provided in Spain provides a useful example of the range of needs and objectives which students appear to have:

Literacy

General culture for the primary education certificate

Courses leading to school-leaving certificates: lower and university entrance

Courses leading to competitive examinations

Technical studies: transistors, wireless, television

Miscellaneous occupations

Administrative organisation

Book-keeping

Secretarial work

Modern languages

Classical languages

Banking

Domestic science

Music, singing, design

Hobbies: photography, guitar-playing, judo etc.¹¹

The list demonstrates the three main areas of need in the meeting of which correspondence education is of significance. We have already identified the first of these as being the area of *professional qualification*. Here the close relationship between the examining body, whether statutory or voluntary, and the provider of a specialised correspondence course usually ensures minimum standards adequate for the professional activity concerned.

The second area may be identified as *remedial general education*. This type of correspondence education enables those who have, for whatever reason, not been able to take advantage of the education provided by the normal agents of the public system of general education, i.e. the schools and universities, to make good that deficiency, at whatever level. Not many countries in Europe find it necessary, as is the case in *Spain*, to provide remedial opportunities for the achievement of literacy or primary education. The completion of secondary education to the level at which university entrance is secured is, however, as yet denied to large numbers of intellectually able children in many European countries. In the *United Kingdom* the achievement of the Ordinary or Advanced levels in the General Certificate of Education, and thus the qualification for admission to universities or other institutions of higher education, accounts for a substantial proportion of all correspondence students. The role of correspondence education has also been of particular importance in the field of general education in countries where access to higher education has been much restricted. Since higher education is expensive, access to it is, in most countries, limited by economic considerations. In such circumstances correspondence education, which can be undertaken alongside paid employment, provides virtually the only alternative means of undertaking higher education. In the *United Kingdom* the external degrees of London University provide such access and correspondence institutions of a private nature, as well as the Commerce Degree Bureau of the University, have helped many thousands

of students to achieve graduate status. With the expansion of the universities and the provision of grants from public funds for all those accepted for university study, the demand for correspondence education for degrees from *United Kingdom* candidates has declined. But the demand from other English-speaking countries continues. Those in membership of the Council of Europe which make use of these facilities include *Malta* and *Cyprus*. As the evidence submitted by the latter country points out, "Great Britain is particularly important to young Cypriots (and the younger adults) for providing courses for University degrees (there is no University in Cyprus, the highest educational institution being the Pedagogical Academy and the Technological Institute). The main suppliers of such courses are Wolsey Hall and the I.C.S." ¹²

Personal non-examinable or non-vocational studies form the third group identified in the Spanish list. It includes music undertaken for pleasure; hobbies such as photography; sport such as judo, and so on. It also includes humane and social studies such as philosophy, economics, sociology and politics, fields in which correspondence courses in *Sweden* help "members of study circles associated with voluntary popular education".¹³ The borderline between such studies and the vocational and professional ones discussed earlier is often difficult to draw. In the study of modern languages, for example, the same course will often be taken by a student learning the language in order to be able to speak it on holiday in the country concerned and by a student requiring this for the exercise of his profession or business. The evidence submitted by member States suggests, however, that this group of needs and objectives is not one which is widely met by means of correspondence study. This is perhaps not surprising since it is the type of learning activity in which the social element plays a more important part than in the other two. It is the area of adult education where the therapeutic role of the group often plays an important part. Moreover it is an area in which the economic effects of correspondence study are not likely to be substantial and where therefore the investment in courses tends not to be made as freely.

The ages of correspondence students

As might be expected, the evidence, such as it is, suggests that correspondence students are concentrated in the younger adult age groups:

Country	School leaving age - age 29	30 years and over
Switzerland (Onken)	83.4 %	16.6 %
Germany	56	44
Netherlands	74.8	25.2
Sweden (Hermods)	50+	50—

As the general demand for education increases and better provision is made for future generations of children than was made for their parents, it is likely, however, that the proportion of older adults taking advantage of educational opportunities will increase. It is pointed out in the evidence from Norway that "the increasing opportunities for youth creates a 'school gap' between the age groups widening to a dangerous gorge over a generation. This situation and prospect dawning upon the people concerned, the politicians and the educators, and the rapidly growing demand for adult education on all levels and in all fields will in the near future result in an Act on Adult Education, presumably based on principles already laid down in the recommendation adopted by Parliament (*Stortingsproposisjon* No. 92 of 1964-65) securing equal rights to education for adults and youth and creating economic conditions enabling adults to avail themselves of educational opportunities."¹⁴

Correspondence education in the armed forces and in prison

Correspondence education, despite its erratic development, is beginning to become firmly established in new spheres, such as the armed forces and prisons.

In the *armed forces* of today, a unit's fighting strength no longer depends on men alone but, essentially, on technological equipment. It is therefore important that military service should not be a blank period from the educational point of view in a young man's life. Consequently, more and more members of the armed forces who want to complete their general education are studying by correspondence or by radio.

In *France*, as already stated in this chapter, the proportion of members of the armed forces among those enrolled for correspondence courses at the *Centre National de Télé-Enseignement* is about 9 %.

In each unit there are arrangements for informing new recruits about further education opportunities and directing them to the *Centre*. Courses are paid for by the military authorities.

In the armed forces of some countries education by correspondence is highly developed. In Norway, for example, tuition is available in all units during leisure time. The men have a choice of 1,000 different courses, run by thirteen correspondence colleges. In 1965, correspondence colleges received more than 35,000 exercises for marking. In 1966-67, 27,705 correspondence courses were provided for military personnel. Instruction is free and studies are supervised by civilian staff. All correspondence courses have to be approved by the Civilian Education Board of the Norwegian Armed Forces.

As far as correspondence education in *prisons* is concerned, prisoners have long been encouraged to use their time to improve their qualifications. For those concerned with assisting prisoners, correspondence courses are a natural ally. In *Sweden*, in recent years, there has been a

greater, more deliberate effort to extend facilities. At the Kumla prison for young offenders, for example, there is now a section where half the working time is set aside for study.

In this field, it is not the prisoners' ability or the actual correspondence method that is the limiting factor but a lack of money: the funds allocated to prison authorities for helping prisoners wishing to study are but nominal.

If scholarships were provided as an incentive for the more gifted prisoners, far more prisoners would spend their leisure-time studying. Even so, it is surprising how many of them do without cigarettes, coffee and newspapers in order to be able to further their education.

The identification of the student body

In the preceding section we have noted a shift of emphasis in the responsibility for identifying the needs for correspondence provision from the student himself to the organisation or institution to which he, for the time being, "belongs". Whereas most of our earlier questions have been concerned with the identification of the student who individually becomes a client of a correspondence institution, the examples drawn from the French army and the provision made by the prison service in Sweden indicate that an organisation may on occasion take the initiative in providing, or arranging for the provision of, correspondence courses for its members.

This form of generation of correspondence education clearly leads to a significant part of the work undertaken by the L.O.I. in the *Netherlands*. This institute has analysed the preliminary investigation which has to be undertaken when a new correspondence course is under consideration. It sets out the steps involved as follows:

"1. (a) Request for a course, of bodies, social or industrial organisations, individual parties or persons.

(b) L.O.I. collaborators detect existence of a social want.

2. Inquiry into the degree of urgency with which a special training is wanted and also whether it can be taken in hand with complete justification and responsibility.

3. Inquiry into the social profit by the training.

4. Initial talks with experts.

5. Co-operation with official or semi-official bodies re auspices.

6. Investment-plan for the training subsidisation.

7. Tentative curriculum.

8. Consultations with the various councils of the L.O.I.

9. Decisions on the use of complementary oral and (or) practical lessons.

10. Inquiry into the possibilities of international co-operation." 15

Where the need is identified by an institution which can also guarantee, within limits, to provide the student body, the economic problems connected with the provision of courses are much reduced. Supply can be matched to demand more accurately and much of the speculation is taken out of an otherwise open-ended situation. The client organisation also derives advantages. It is relieved of the organisation of educational facilities for its members or employees. It is also able to a greater extent to ensure that the courses followed by those whom it sponsors relate to their technical or professional needs as discerned by the organisation.

Links of this type of course have their dangers. It is easy to overstep the thin line between task-oriented education and a training which narrows rather than enlarges competence and understanding. If the content of a course is determined entirely by the short-term needs of a particular organisation, then the chances are that just such a narrowing course will be requested. Hence the importance of educational providers having enough independence to withstand pressures of this kind. They must, of course, have not only the independence but also the educational competence to do so. In a field such as correspondence education where traditionally private enterprise has played such a prominent role and the relationship between educational standards and the profit motive has been uniformly clear, the need for the establishment and maintenance of clear educational minimum standards by some independent assessing body has a good deal to commend it. The moves in this direction which are currently being made in a number of countries will be discussed further in chapter V.

New uses for correspondence education

The traditional uses of correspondence education which are identified earlier in this chapter are no longer the only ones. In recent years the new impetus deriving from the development of multi-media systems has brought the use of correspondence education back to the forefront of educational methods. A further stimulus has been provided by the demand of the educated for further education. Dr. Börje Holmberg of the Hermods Correspondence College in Sweden identified in 1966 three new categories of students which have emerged in Sweden:

" 1. Those who already possess a good general education and are professionally established; for example responsible employees in business and administration who study subjects like automatic data processing, distribution economy, or complicated accountancy, or who in this way keep in touch with the latest development in their fields;

2. More or less bright schoolboys and schoolgirls who take correspondence courses, not because they are interested in them but because they have to do so as part of the school curriculum or as a means of improving their standard, and

3. Apprentices and manual workers who are instructed by their employers to study in this way." ¹⁶

Professional development

The first group is one which is increasing preoccupying the providers and planners of adult education. The *Swedish* report puts it "As developments and the results of research constantly create new needs for knowledge, adult education has, to a great extent, come into vogue for the highly educated. In this perspective of permanent education, the problem of adult education acquires much greater scope and urgency than ever before. It is not a question of a minor extension to formal youth education but of a major new planning operation; a new and exciting phase in the emergence of the education welfare State."¹⁷ The extension of the uses of correspondence for university-level education is part of the move towards catering for the new educated class. Lord Crowther, the Chancellor of the Open University in the *United Kingdom*, recognised similar immediate tasks of the University in his inaugural address. "The first, and most urgent, task before us is to cater for the many thousands of people, fully capable of higher education, who for one reason or another do not get it, or do not get as much of it as they can turn to advantage, or as they discover, sometimes too late, that they need. Only in recent years have we come to recognise how many such people there are and how large are the gaps in educational provision through which they can fall... We are open as to methods... The world is caught in a Communications Revolution... Every new form of human communication will be examined to see how it can be used to raise and broaden the level of human understanding."¹⁸

Thus, tuition by correspondence is an increasingly important part of university-level education. At the same time, university-level education is increasingly dependent on material which allows students to work on their own. This is resulting in new uses being made not only of programmed material but also of the kind of texts that can be offered by correspondence teaching establishments.

There are various reasons why correspondence tuition can be an important adjunct in higher education. They include the following:

- The great increase in the number of students means that more teaching material is needed, as well as means of supervision and guidance different from the conventional ones — in other words, ways of transmitting knowledge different from those used in direct tuition.

- The opening-up of higher education to all social levels necessitates the provision of extra tuition for those whose theoretical grounding is inadequate and who could not otherwise study according to their particular interests.

- Education by correspondence is particularly useful for those who work for their living and study in their spare time, those who, for financial or other reasons, cannot live in a university town and those who can do the necessary practical work but cannot attend lectures.

— In some sectors, correspondence tuition is a natural complement to university-level radio and television courses, seminars and group studies.

State and private establishments which provide correspondence tuition for those who have already studied to a fairly advanced level are therefore constantly expanding. The range of courses they offer at this level is constantly increasing. Such courses are intended not only for students of university age but also for those who need higher qualifications for professional reasons. These latter students — generally teachers or teachers-to-be — will do most of their studies by correspondence at home, in their spare time, receiving the necessary oral or practical instruction in the form of lectures, group exercises, laboratory work etc. This combined method is particularly useful in countries where there is a shortage of qualified teachers.

In *Sweden*, correspondence courses of this kind are at present available in mathematics, physics, chemistry, German, English, theology, economics, political science and education: more courses are planned. A basic oral course in education and political science was first held in 1965; in the same year the advanced courses in mathematics and physics were inaugurated. These courses are run at public expense as a means of offsetting the serious shortage of qualified teachers in many subjects.

In *Norway*, many law students at Oslo University, for example, sit their examinations after doing the bulk of their studies, both theoretical and practical, by correspondence. Their syllabus and exercises are the same as for the ordinary students at the Oslo law faculty and their work is marked and commented on by the University staff. Some of the students attend lectures in the summer and continue their studies by correspondence in the winter.

This method of study is also being used for highly specialised vocational subjects. For instance, the *Swedish* National Highways Board has run a correspondence course in personnel management for executives, ending with a short residential course. A total of 1,000 employees attended the course in two years. Another correspondence course run by the Board was in as specialised a subject as road maintenance.

An important aspect of university-level in-service training by correspondence is the one which concerns teachers themselves. If people are to keep abreast of the latest progress in their particular professional fields, it is most important that those who are to provide them with the necessary instruction should themselves possess optimum facilities for constantly extending and revising their knowledge. At the same time, the general expansion of education has increased the need for teachers: not only is there a demand for more young teachers but extra courses have had to be arranged for adult educators. A third factor is that the educational reforms which have been widely initiated cannot be carried through unless large numbers of teachers are given further training.

In Sweden, correspondence methods are widely used for the in-service training of teachers.

The mathematics course in upper secondary schools now includes such new aspects as the theory of sets and logic, probability calculus and statistics; natural science is an eclectic subject, embodying elements of physics, chemistry, biology and geology; technology is an entirely new basic subject. To equip teachers for teaching these subjects, three-week extension classes have been arranged, but teachers can also do the necessary study by correspondence. Appropriate courses in mathematics, natural science and technology have been prepared by the Hermods Correspondence Institute. Teachers taking these courses are released from some of their teaching duties, and the courses are paid for by the government. The Swedish Ministry of Education is expecting thousands of secondary school teachers to qualify by correspondence for teaching "new subjects".

Still in Sweden, a two-year advanced course was run for secondary-level economics teachers. The aim of the course was not to enable those taking it to qualify for higher posts, even though their knowledge of economics was undoubtedly extended well beyond the level of an upper secondary economics examination. All material was paid for by the Ministry of Education. Six times during the course those taking it were assembled in Malmö for a few days' revision and written examinations. Travelling and subsistence expenses and lecturers' fees were paid by the Ministry of Education.

The course thus enabled teachers to study for two years at an advanced level without being away from their work for more than a fortnight.

Another effective method is the training of teachers by a combination of correspondence tuition and classroom instruction. A specific example of this is the continued training — again in Sweden — of teachers of business administration subjects in commercial and vocational colleges. A two-term course for one group of such teachers was arranged jointly by the Vocational Training Board and Hermods. The group studied by correspondence but assembled every four months or so in Malmö (at the Hermods Institute) for examinations and lectures. The financial advantages of such a system, where teachers are away from their work for only a very short time, are obvious. Equally obvious are the pedagogical benefits of such extra training.

In France, a significant example of in-service training by correspondence for teachers is the course leading to the *agrégation*, run by the *Centre National de Télé-Enseignement*. The *agrégation* is a very high-level competitive examination, success in which opens up senior posts in *lycées* to students and practising teachers (many of whom subsequently go on to university teaching). More and more of those who pass the *agrégation* studied for it by correspondence, either using this method alone or combining it with attendance at university lectures.

The use of correspondence education in schools

The present study is not concerned in detail with the second of Dr. Holmberg's categories of new correspondence students. It is, however, significant that the expansion of many fields of knowledge at the present time has as one of its consequences the inability of many schools to provide a wide enough range of expert knowledge for their pupils. In such a situation a correspondence course filling a specific gap, and used under supervision, may well be the best and most economic way of teaching the pupils concerned.

In the past, there were two main ways in which ordinary education and correspondence tuition were used in combination (neither way requiring any extensive organisation):

— One way was the use of correspondence course material in school classrooms whenever it was in any respect better than the ordinary school text-books.

— Secondly, individual pupils would supplement their classroom studies with correspondence courses, usually in the holidays, for the purpose of improving their pass marks and ensuring their admission to the senior classes.

Although both these combinations are still used in some countries, others have since appeared. These arose because many correspondence students needed more help, encouragement and guidance than the correspondence method could supply on its own and because correspondence tuition was the necessary adjunct to higher education in sparsely-populated areas and in small towns without the necessary ordinary facilities (as well as in towns where the necessary facilities did exist but could cater for only a limited number of students).

The new combinations of correspondence learning and school and university education also resulted from the need to adapt education to the individual and from the growing use of "active" teaching methods, involving more independent individual or group work and greater freedom for pupils in choosing subjects and syllabuses.

Correspondence tuition is thus sometimes used to supplement school teaching and stimulate pupils. This method will often include:

- the consultation of reference works,
- the making of and listening to recordings (in foreign language studies),
- written advice by the teacher in charge.

At the same time, supplementary classroom instruction, accompanied by group work, will be given by the teacher in charge.

Pupils will be divided into groups according to the subjects studied. To some extent, they will work at different paces and the composition of the groups will vary from one period to another. With study by correspondence a high degree of individualisation is possible. Thus, additional material, more complex and requiring more detailed study, will be added to the syllabus for pupils who have a particular interest in this or that subject or who are specially gifted.

In this field, mention should be made of a new method used in civics education. It consists in forwarding pupils' work to political and governmental policy-making bodies for comments; with some courses special "suggestions sheets" are supplied for this purpose.

Sometimes one or more teachers will act simply as intermediaries between the correspondence teaching college and a group of pupils. Lessons and other material will be sent to the college and the latter will itself supervise the pupils' work.

Industrial education by correspondence

The growth of industrial uses for correspondence has been particularly marked in *France*. The CNTE conducts a substantial number of courses specifically designed for particular industries and government departments. Such bodies include French Railways, the Army and Navy, the prison administration section of the Ministry of Justice, as well as about 15 companies in the private sector of industry and three educational institutions overseas. The way in which this link between the CNTE and industry works is illustrated by a programme organised for the chemical industry.

1. Chemical workers are invited to enrol in general subjects courses provided by the *Centre National* so that they may reach an adequate level of education;

2. the students receive their theoretical training with the help of course material (in a number of consignments) and exercises. The industry is asked to nominate a qualified engineer as leader; he receives the course material and distributes it to the students whose course work he supervises;

3. practical training is done within the company, according to the instructions sent to the leader;

4. three-day courses are organised several times each year — most frequently in technical educational institutions which have departments preparing for the chemical technician *baccalauréat* — for practical studies requiring special equipment.

During 1966-67, 487 students from 278 companies took such courses which were taught by 74 teachers attached to State educational institutions and by 25 engineers from the chemical industry. The results obtained, while far from outstanding, are more than encouraging:

	<i>Total candidates</i>	<i>Successful</i>
BEI Assistant Chemist	68	26
BEI Assistant Biochemist	7	3
BEI Chemist	30	13
	<u>105</u>	<u>42 or 40 %²¹</u>

The most substantial project concerned with technical and industrial education to use correspondence in *Germany* up to the present has been the *Telekolleg* organised jointly by the Bavarian Ministry of Education and Bavarian Television. This began in 1967 "presenting a mixture of correspondence, television and oral tuition leading to the qualifying certificate for admission to a higher technical school... 80 % of all participants are workers and salaried employees; 75 % are men, 25 % women. The age groups are:

under 18 years	22 %
18-25 years	22 %
25-35 years	38 %
over 35 years	18 %

In January 1967, 14,555 had registered for the *Telekolleg*, 3,800 of whom passed their first intermediate examination in January 1968."²²

Co-operation between correspondence colleges and firms offers numerous advantages:

- courses, methods and syllabuses can be directly adapted or "tailored" to the special circumstances and needs of each firm or sector of industry;

- there can be maximum individualisation in teaching systems, starting levels and time-tables; instruction can thus be adapted to working conditions and occupational requirements;

- the correspondence tuition can easily be combined with direct tuition, practical demonstrations, group study etc.;

— it is possible to study faster and more widely than with the traditional forms of tuition;

— costs are lower than for most of the comparable methods of study.

The system of co-operation may take various forms:

— One form is where the correspondence college (public or private) runs one or more vocational training courses. In this case, everything will be handled by one of the college's instructors, in liaison with the firm.

— Another form is where the correspondence college collaborates with the firm's training department. Here, the college will be responsible solely for the theoretical instruction; the practical training being provided by the firm itself (or by a group of firms).

— Thirdly, a firm may send its employees to the correspondence college for the whole of their training. This will be done when there are too few participants to warrant the provision of vocational training on the spot.

Sometimes co-operation will be established on the basis of existing correspondence courses; alternatively, special courses and material will be produced. In either case, there will be consultation between the firm and the correspondence college. Obviously, however, there will need to be much closer consultation and co-operation when a new course and new material have to be devised than when an existing course and existing arrangements can be used (consultation over such questions as the curriculum, tuition methods, the syllabus, possible combination with other forms of study, the organisation of study guidance and the marking of exercises).

More and more new correspondence courses are being produced for firms. Originally, this was done simply by putting together parts of various existing courses, but it has become increasingly common for entirely new courses and material to be devised in co-operation with the firm concerned.

This has influenced the pattern of co-operation between colleges and firms. Not only are joint decisions taken on subjects and methods but the planning and execution of the whole course are done jointly, (e.g. the training of instructors for discussion groups and the holding of short supplementary courses of lectures or practical work).

Examples of what has been achieved by such means are to be found in firms of the most varied kinds, involving personnel at all levels. In Sweden, for example, a large chain of department stores has arranged a course for its managers and trainees. A brewery has provided training for consultants and departmental heads. Other examples are courses for the clerical and technical staff of the Cellulose Company and for

salesmen of the Volvo Motor Company; like the previously-mentioned courses, these were arranged in conjunction with the Hermods Institute. The Swedish Radio and Television Corporation has long been encouraging its employees — technical, administrative and planning staff — to take a correspondence course aimed at “ internal ” recruitment to senior posts. The Corporation generally refunds 50-100 % of the cost at the end of the course. On an average, one technician in every four takes a correspondence course.

Another type of joint educational scheme is the one carried out at the big LKAB mining company in Kiruna, in the far north of Sweden. Two courses were arranged in co-operation with Brevskolan. One, entitled “ Iron ore and we, the producers ”, provided instruction in economic, technical and social matters for the personnel as a whole. The other was a supplementary course equivalent in standard to upper secondary level and *fackskola* (college of further education) courses. This was designed for workers who had been selected for training as foremen and supervisors but needed first of all to fill the gaps in their general education. The scheme illustrates the new educational needs in a situation where the influx of young people who have studied to a higher level is not enough to provide all the skilled manpower required in an expanding industry subject to rapid technical change.

Similarly, in France, commercial, industrial and craft apprentices whose articles require them to undergo further theoretical and practical training will often take correspondence courses, supplemented with instruction from their firms' supervisory staff. These include the correspondence courses established by the Professional Association of Trade Guilds, (*Association Professionnelle des Chambres des Métiers*), the Central Co-ordinating Committee for Building Apprenticeships (*le Comité central de coordination de l'apprentissage du bâtiment*) and various regional agricultural associations. Vocational training courses by correspondence are also provided by other firms or economic sectors, e.g. the chemical industry, the National Association of Telephone Equipment Manufacturers, the Federation of Motor Repair Firms, banking and the banking profession.

Conclusion

We have assembled in this chapter a wide range of evidence about the reasons why students take up correspondence study. Is it possible from this evidence to distil a generally applicable profile of the correspondence student?

It seems clear that more men than women tend to undertake correspondence study. This has certainly been the case in the past, and this is not surprising since it links naturally with another important fact about correspondence education, namely that it is undertaken in the majority

of cases to improve the student's standing in his own trade or profession, or to enable him to enter a different profession. Since this motivation is clearly one of great importance in correspondence education, it is not surprising that correspondence education has begun to gain in importance in recent years. This is little more than a reflection of the growing mobility of labour and the increasing complexity of specialisms in industry and commerce. The more extensive participation of women in both these spheres suggests that the proportion of women undertaking correspondence education is likely to increase, although the fact that such study is undertaken at home is always likely to put women at a disadvantage, since the demands of the home impinge more inescapably on women than on men.

Since correspondence study tends to be undertaken mainly by men for vocational purposes, it is again not surprising to find evidence that the major proportion of correspondence students tends to fall between the ages of 20 and 40, with significant extensions both downwards and upwards in the age range. Correspondence education is clearly important to initial training in a number of trades and professions, particularly those in the commercial field (including banking, insurance and similar service industries). It is also significant for people anxious to advance in their professions and requiring particular paper qualifications to do so. Being within the major age group, many correspondence students have incurred family responsibilities which make it difficult for them to undertake full-time education, or any form of part-time education which inhibits their ability to earn their living. Lastly, correspondence education is undertaken by those, usually at the upper end of the main age range, who wish to change their occupations. Here again the family commitment tends to combine with the requirements of current employment to make it impossible to take "time off" to prepare for a new career. This has to be done alongside the present one. And correspondence study is an obvious method. As the expectation of life continues to increase and the rate of turnover of knowledge accelerates, it is to be expected that the age range for correspondence education will extend upwards.

A third characteristic of correspondence students is that they tend to be concentrated in the more urban areas of a country and tend to predominate in areas where the commercial life of a country goes on. This characteristic has only recently been established and has come as something of a surprise to those who have believed that correspondence education was appropriate mainly to those living out of reach of opportunities for face-to-face tuition. This is clearly not so. The flexibility of correspondence education makes it attractive to people in urban areas and the employment opportunities in occupations for which it is possible to prepare by correspondence are greater in urban areas. We have noted the evidence of the uses of correspondence education in the rural areas, both for the training of agriculturists and horticulturists and, in countries

such as Norway and Sweden with substantial difficulties of communication, for people who actually are out of reach of educational institutions. But these are in a minority.

Lastly, we have identified new areas of development for correspondence education, particularly in combination with other media. We have seen that it is increasingly becoming used for professional development of people who already have a full professional education, and by institutions and organisations which wish to provide a uniform level of in-service or in-plant education in a number of scattered units, such as military installations, prisons, factories etc. In this type of setting a central educational service using correspondence (and other) methods is often thought to maximise the return on the educational investment.

Having identified the correspondence student, we must go on to identify the institution which provides for him. This is the purpose of chapter III.

III.

THE TEACHING INSTITUTIONS

The institutional framework of correspondence education differs from that of almost all other types of educational provision in that it has always included a substantial element of private initiative and enterprise. The reason for this is not far to seek. Since most correspondence education has been closely vocational in orientation, since it has tended to be undertaken part-time by men and women in full employment, and since there has been little statutory provision for such students, three considerations vital to the creation and survival of private enterprise have been present. The first is the incentive to invest money in education. This has been provided by the expectation of the increased income which most correspondence students hope to derive as a result of the raising of the level of their academic or professional attainment. The second consideration has been the existence of a sufficiently large group of potential correspondence students able to make such an investment by paying the fees charged by commercial establishments. This has been assured by the large numbers of people engaged in employment at a level below their potential who have sufficient earnings to enable them to divert a part of these to the payment of fees for correspondence study. The third has been the indifference of governments to the needs of such students. This indifference has only recently begun to give way to a recognition of the importance, in a modern economy, of in-service training for a wide range of occupations if a country is to become, or remain, competitive in the struggle for economic development.

In countries where industrialisation has only recently begun, this early, commercial, phase of correspondence education has largely been avoided. Governments themselves have taken an important stake in the provision of correspondence education for the reasons just given. *Turkey* is an example of such a country. Until the establishment of a Correspondence Education Centre in the Under-Secretariat for Vocational and

Technical Education of the Turkish Ministry of Education in 1960 there had been "very few correspondence courses specifically designed as such. While there are some private institutions their organisation and working systems cannot be followed well, and their activities often are periodical, so they can be disregarded..."²³.

International exchange and co-operation has played an important part in the spread of the interest in correspondence education to governments. Since the governments of most member States of the Council of Europe are interested in the combination of rapid expansion of educational facilities with the containment of educational expenditure, they have tended to welcome any information and experience which might help them to achieve their objective. *Turkey* again furnishes an example. "The idea of education by correspondence was initiated officially in 1959 by Mr. Resat Ozalp who had observed education in Australia... This proposal of Mr. Resat Ozalp was considered favourably by the Ministry of Education... In order to set up the Correspondence Education Centre in modern sense, to train the administrators about its operation and to find suitable personnel, a detailed project was designed and given to the OECD for the purpose of getting the necessary support. Mr. M. Chenivese, the Director of the Technical Division of the (French) *Centre National de l'Enseignement par Correspondance*, was sent to Turkey on June 6 1960."²⁴

In these ways, as well as by direct contact between correspondence colleges (which is discussed more fully in chapter VI), the flow of ideas across national boundaries has since the second world war begun to bear useful fruit. Indeed, it is largely as a result of this interchange that the present study came to be undertaken by the Council for Cultural Co-operation. It augurs well for the future that educators are learning from each other, particularly in those areas which appear to be growth points of educational development. Some discussion of future possibilities is included in chapter VI.

In this chapter we consider the institutional framework as it exists today rather than as it may develop tomorrow. We look first at the commercial colleges, their structure and financial arrangements, their contracts with their students and their recruitment methods. We then study the extent to which governments have begun to step in to control the activities of the commercial colleges, and consider how they have set about this task. We shall finally consider the extent to which governments and other public bodies have themselves become entrepreneurs in this field.

The commercial colleges

The circumstances which led to the creation of commercial correspondence colleges have already been described. These circumstances obtained particularly in the second half of the 19th century in the *United Kingdom*. "It is claimed that correspondence tuition started about 1840

when the original Mr. Pitman sent his students instruction in shorthand by postcards. Its more systematic organisation dates from 1880 and 1890. Many of the better known colleges started during this period... Most of these began modestly with the coaching of a few individuals by an individual... All were originally concerned with a single subject or examination, until a rapid rise of clientele... suggested commercial possibilities... Most of the colleges operated from offices in locations which were convenient for postal services, and subsequently for access to a 'pool' of school or college staff. The student clientele wrote from all over the British Isles. From an early date they also enrolled from many parts of the Empire and Commonwealth, South America, independent Asia, and almost any area where education used the medium of English. The statistics of correspondence study in Britain are consequently difficult to disentangle from those relating to the world as a whole. Nearly all the correspondence institutions are commercial concerns with little reason for keeping detailed records except those essential to efficient working or useful for publicity."²⁵

These somewhat haphazard beginnings seem to have characterised the early phases of correspondence education in a number of countries. One has the impression that many of the 400 or so correspondence institutions in Europe began in similar ways. Too little is as yet known of the precise origins of most of them, and the survey on which this report is based does not disclose much information on this point. It is clear, however, that most colleges, even though launched by private initiative, have had at least some sense of educational responsibility. In some countries, such as Holland, this has led the colleges themselves to seek an element of public control. In others, such as the *United Kingdom*, they have prided themselves on their independence and have only recently established a measure of internal control combined with external consultation.

The gap between the responsible colleges and those more concerned to make a profit than to give their students good service has widened in recent years. Having described the "accredited" colleges in *Holland*, the Director of *Leidsche Onderwijsinstellingen* continues his survey of the Dutch position: "However, we regret to say that in the Netherlands, as in most other countries, there are schools which do by no means come up to the standards appropriate to educational institutions; these schools either could not be accredited or they had to be expelled, because their standards had deteriorated. Until a few years ago there were too many of these schools in this country, but most of them have vanished like snow before the sun. The good work of the bona fide schools, the average Dutchman's situation which compelled the correspondence schools to train students for examinations organised by officially recognised bodies, all these factors have made the survival of these mala-fide schools, virtually all of which were post-war creations, practically impossible. In the *Netherlands*, it's a pleasure to say this, good correspondence education does not make anyone rich."²⁶

Methods of recruitment

The correspondence colleges in the private sector tend to be private companies, often family concerns in origin, which have in recent years moved out of their narrow confines and have begun to seek contact with each other and with the public system. Their students have traditionally been attracted by means of advertisements except in cases where colleges have a structural link with a professional body and thus a secured clientele. Some colleges have proceeded by personal sales methods, sending their agents to see prospective clients in their homes. This method has tended to be spurned by the better established colleges on grounds that it puts undue pressure on potential clients. The use or non-use of this practice appears currently to be a matter of lively debate between different correspondence colleges and different groups of correspondence colleges throughout Europe. The more conservative colleges deprecate the practice; those, including some controlled from the United States, which believe in more aggressive sales methods, are advocating doorstep selling.

Two considerations appear to arise. The first is the method of selection and training, and of payment, of these peripatetic counsellors/salesmen. The second is the propriety of undertaking this type of activity in the home. On the latter point some of the more advanced thinking about adult education at the present time is much concerned about the gap between existing educational provision and the large majority of the potential clientele. As the need for broadly diffused continuing education increases, educational institutions need to be in touch with a larger proportion of citizens than those who are, by temperament or previous education, predisposed towards continuing their education. In most countries the majority of citizens do not know how to set about obtaining more education even if they want it. Thus the principle of expanding the advisory services available to adults seeking educational opportunities is thoroughly sound. It is the lack of objectivity inherent in the commitment to one particular way of meeting a variety of needs that is one of the faults of the correspondence course salesman.

Similarly the selection and training of sales staff is in most cases inadequate; indeed it is bound to be so, given their task to sell one particular firm's correspondence courses. An entirely different situation would arise if the peripatetic counsellors were employed by a public authority and were free to recommend such educational media as may be appropriate in any given case. In one or two areas of Britain moves are currently on foot to develop a better system of counselling for adult students under the auspices of local education authorities.

The conduct of the colleges

Different approaches to the conduct of correspondence colleges may best be illustrated by one or two examples. First, a correspondence college in *Switzerland*, specifically concerned with commercial education.

In 1964, the Swiss Company of Merchants founded the Swiss Institute of Higher Commercial Training (SIB) in order to further the vocational training of business employees and commercial teachers. In the spring of 1967, the SIB opened a correspondence college whose activities, ever since its inception, have been appreciated not only by business employees but by a wider public too.

As a first step, the college initiated a course leading to the Federal book-keeper's diploma. Courses in all the main commercial subjects are planned. Tuition is by university lecturers with long experience of commercial teaching.

The method used involves, apart from exercises, "test questions" which the students answer and then check their answers from the course material. Each student's performance and progress are noted in his record, with marks and comments, by the tutorial staff. Another progress check is made at revision classes, which usually take place on Saturdays. The classes are organised by the correspondence college and are held at various commercial schools. To supplement the correspondence tuition, the college has arranged for students to be able to obtain personal advice from experienced commercial school teachers.

The SIB's college, like the correspondence school of the University Graduates' Association (*Akademiker-Gemeinschaft*), prepares its students for a final examination which is held under government supervision. Many other correspondence schools hold examinations which they supervise themselves.

The SIB's college has introduced one feature which is new to *Switzerland*, namely the fact that it is possible for students to alternate between correspondence tuition and classroom study. For this purpose, the college's courses are co-ordinated with evening classes at commercial training schools. An evening class student who is called up for military service or falls sick is thus able to keep up his studies by correspondence; similarly, a correspondence student who falls behind can catch up by attending classes at commercial schools. Every year, moreover, the SIB arranges day classes usually at middle-management level. These many contacts between the economic world and commercial colleges are proving very fruitful²⁷.

Next, an example of correspondence education in *Austria*. "The well known private institute of Dr. Roland in Vienna started in 1949 the correspondence course to prepare external candidates for the leaving examination for general secondary schools. These correspondence courses run alongside the usual daily lessons. The participants are invited to contact, if necessary, the teachers or former pupils and ask them questions about things which they do not understand... The correspondence courses prepare also for other examinations at a lower level than the leaving examination from the general secondary schools. The participants are not as numerous as those in the first group of courses.

"The interested persons come mainly from among people living at some distance from secondary schools and those who begin to study at a later age than normal. Often they pursue a profession during their studies. The average age is between 20 and 30 years, but there are also older students. Of those following correspondence courses about 75 % are men and 25 % women.

The teaching material takes the form of instructional letters ranging from 8 to 30 pages in length. These are sent to students at regular intervals, which are determined by the student's own pace of learning. Besides these letters records and tapes are also used. At the end of each letter exercises are given which have to be completed and returned to the headquarters of the correspondence college for correction by the teaching staff. The staff not only correct the exercises but also give advice on study where necessary."²⁸

Here the purpose of the correspondence provision is primarily to underpin the general secondary educational system rather than to prepare students for particular professional examinations.

The private establishment in *Spain*, CCC (Centre for Culture by Correspondence), has not only staff for preparing lessons and marking exercises but also staff whose specific task is to keep up the interest and efforts of students who are behindhand. This centre belongs to the Spanish National Association of Correspondence Tuition Establishments, which is under official supervision but not under State ownership. The correspondence tuition it provides is fully individualised: students can enrol at any time and in any subjects they choose. They will first of all receive from the centre the material for the course they have chosen. Then their relationship with the centre will begin; during this period they will from time to time send in their work and receive it back marked. At the end of the course, the appropriate certificate will be awarded to successful students. A further point is that students may pay the prescribed dues and fees at their own convenience.

Lastly, an example from *Norway*. Among commercial institutions in Norway are the following three schools. "1. The oldest and largest school is the Norwegian Correspondence School (NKS), which was founded in 1914. It has a considerable number of courses varying from popular hobby courses to more advanced courses, such as mathematics and philosophy for students preparing for university examinations and complete general secondary school courses. 2. The Nordic Correspondence Institute (NKI) provides a large number of technical courses at a fairly high level. This school which started as a subordinate establishment of a Swedish school a few years ago, has since 1966 been an independent institution, for the first two years in collaboration with the NKS. 3. The Correspondence Academy (KA) was founded in 1936 and has now a number of courses, including general secondary school courses, commercial and technical courses."²⁹

The staffs of correspondence colleges

As has already been indicated, the commercial correspondence colleges have tended to recruit their teaching staffs from among serving school teachers whose salaries are often so low that they need a secondary source of income. Although, therefore, many of the tutors in correspondence colleges are qualified both in their subjects and as teachers, the latter qualification is relevant to their full-time employment rather than their work in the field of correspondence education. The *German* report states "At present there are no criteria whatever for the qualification of teachers engaged for correspondence tuition. Some institutes publish the names of authors of courses, of correctors, and of teachers who give oral tuition. It can be assumed that especially those correspondence schools which prepare their pupils for State examinations have a staff of qualified teachers. Conscientious schools have their courses prepared by teams of experts."³⁰

The proposed *Dutch* law governing correspondence education provides that "The authors of courses and correctors of exercises done by students shall hold certificates, as indicated by the Minister of Education and Science, analogous to the requirements for (oral) school education; or, if there is no such analogy, shall hold testimonials of skill and suitability acceptable to the Minister."³¹ But the insistence on professional competence towards which the Dutch system is working is as yet a good way from being realised, even in theory, in other countries. In *Switzerland*, for example, "Correspondence school teachers... are for the most part final-year students. The SIB's correspondence college is the only one to employ fully-trained graduates with long experience of commercial teaching or study supervision... Many correspondence schools train their authors by giving them written and oral information on preparing and organising lessons. In the case of the SIB's college, there are also meetings in the form of lectures and group activities. The same is done for the training of assistant tutors and markers. The college's administrative staff are also properly trained so as to maintain the standard of work. This training is given either by the college itself or by outside specialists."³²

The absence of adequately trained staff for correspondence education is also noted in the report from *Turkey*. "Correspondence education should be carried out with a group of trained personnel who believe in the use and need of this method, and have the technical skills required, and have experience in this field. There is not now sufficient staff trained in this field. It can also be claimed that the personnel now administering and directing the Centre has insufficient knowledge and experience, particularly as it applies to our own country.

First of all there is a great demand for the personnel who are experienced and have the deepest knowledge. Such people are aware of the philosophy of correspondence education and can apply this method

to the various fields of education very easily, and will be able to make this system respected and desired as a means of education throughout the country. The demand for trained personnel is not only in the field of administration, but also in preparing the curriculum and materials." ³³

Clearly there is a need for the development, in some centres of higher education in Europe, of facilities for training and research in correspondence education. The urgency of this need is emphasised in the report from *Spain*. "There is an urgent need to create and train for this kind of tuition a special body of teachers who are conversant with the psychological characteristics of correspondence students (adults at varying stages of maturity) and the particular problem of correspondence teaching. Also, it would be desirable if the contents and methods of correspondence tuition were to be studied at all teacher-training colleges and university education departments and as part of out-of-school education. This training should cover the planning and execution of courses, the marking of work and the assessment of students." ³⁴

A difficulty standing in the way of early action in this field is that the numbers of professionals concerned in most countries is fairly small. Thus it is uneconomic to establish substantial training arrangements in individual countries. The unregulated nature of much correspondence education also makes it difficult to insist on the employment of trained personnel. In the *United Kingdom* a small beginning has been made in the University of Manchester, where the study of correspondence education has been built into the range of optional courses which may be followed by students reading for the Advanced Diploma in Adult Education. As a result of the research carried out in the field of correspondence education in the Department of Adult Education of that University there exists a body of material which can be used by students of correspondence methods. The establishment of two or three other centres in other parts of Europe would do much to raise the level of proficiency in the conduct of correspondence education throughout the Continent.

The development of non-profit making colleges

The development of correspondence education on a non-profit making basis has occurred mainly in response to situations in which correspondence education has come to be recognised as an important, or potentially important, sector of the public educational system. In conditions such as these it has been in the interest of governments either to encourage the establishment of voluntary agencies to provide a correspondence service or to establish one themselves.

Norway is a good example of a country where correspondence colleges have been established independent of the State, but under State control and with substantial public financial support. There are four such colleges.

" 1. *Folkets Brevskole* (FB). It was founded in 1947 and is owned jointly by a large number of bodies, the largest of which are the Co-operative Union, the Workers' Educational Association, various trades unions, the Norwegian Sports Association and other organisations of a nation-wide character. The school provides training and education in technical, economic and social fields. To meet the requirements of the different organisations for the training of voluntary workers, the school has a number of courses covering subjects which have a bearing on organisational work and social and political sciences. The school has had great success with its programme for study groups.

2. *Elingaard Brevskole* (EB), established in 1954, co-operates with business organisations, cultural societies and associations and offers courses in the field of art and culture, general education, industrial management and political economy. The school also has many courses especially suited for study groups.

3. *Landbrukets Brevskole* (LB) is an agricultural college owned by various agricultural organisations and has mainly specialised in topics of interest to farmers, smallholders, gardeners and owners of forests, and their employees.

4. The *State Technological Institute* was originally (1938) designed to offer preparatory courses for day and evening classes but they are now open to other students as well. The subjects taught are electrical, radio and television engineering."³⁵

In contrast with the Norwegian system, correspondence education in *France* has been developed under the direct control of the Ministry of Education.

The *National Centre for Correspondence Education* was founded in 1939. It was originally designed as a *lycée*-level establishment, intended simply to meet temporary needs resulting from the outbreak of war and the subsequent evacuation of schoolchildren. From 1944 onwards, the Centre was extended by the addition of a correspondence section for technical subjects, then some primary classes and finally various higher education facilities. Later, special courses for adults were established.

There are now a main centre and five regional centres. The latter are fairly independent; each enrolls its own students and levies the relevant dues (which are limited to the cost of printing and distributing the courses; actual tuition is free). Administrative costs are met from a general State subsidy. The full-time teaching staff are also paid by the State, whilst, as far as the State subsidy will allow, part-time teaching staff are engaged by the Centre itself.

Each regional centre specialises in a particular field:

(a) One of them specialises in certain types of vocational training, organised in conjunction with the French National Railways (its students number 10,000).

(b) Another concentrates on courses leading to the competitive civil service examinations (12,000 students).

(c) A third is concerned with commercial subjects and primary education (22,000 pupils and students).

(d) A fourth specialises in education for children aged from 11 to 16 (6,000 pupils).

(e) A fifth deals with general adult education (13,000 students).

The main centre and regional centres amongst them have almost 350 sections, ranging from the preparatory primary course to the *agrégation*, from the training of skilled workers to that of senior technicians. Each regional centre serves the whole country, its scope being determined not by its geographical position but by the courses it offers (the regional centres' courses are even followed by students abroad).

The main centre is run by a director, assisted by the head of the administrative and technical department and the heads of the various teaching departments. The latter share responsibility for the courses and classes and deal mainly with:

(a) Relations with students (supervision of studies, discipline, expulsions, examination files, scholarships, mark sheets, end-of-term reports, prizes and correspondence);

(b) Relations with the teaching staff (organisation and division of duties);

(c) The organisation of studies (establishment of new sections, recruitment of qualified staff);

(d) More detailed practical matters: selection of recommended text-books; organisation and supervision of the preparation of courses, curricula, exercises and model answers; supervision of the production of such material and of its distribution by the due dates. In each class there is a "senior instructor" to help the head of department in these tasks.

The Centre has its own facilities for printing and reproducing courses and study material. These range from the ordinary typewriter and simple photocopier to the rotary offset machine; even full printing facilities are available if necessary.

For the 80,000 students (of the main centre alone) there are 2,000 teachers and markers. Each student may have up to ten teachers and each teacher several hundred students; hence a vast network of communications has to be established and supervised throughout the year.

Each student is identified, "indexed", observed, assessed and graded. As in an ordinary establishment, mark sheets or reports are regularly drawn up and sent to students (or, in the case of young pupils, to their families).

One of the special features of the French National Centre for Correspondence Education is that it employs secondary or primary school teachers who, for health reasons, are no longer able to do classroom teaching (but have not, of course, lost any of their intellectual capacity or teaching ability). These include teachers suffering from throat or eye complaints, deafness or organic diseases that preclude any physical exertion (e.g. heart diseases), former tubercular cases who still have to be kept out of contact with young people, and teachers suffering from serious nervous disorders (often caused by the strain of maintaining class discipline).

In this way, able teachers can be kept employed. Those of them who adjust more readily to teaching "at a distance" may subsequently join the Centre's permanent staff. Moreover, the National Centre and regional centres have a large number of teachers, especially for technical subjects, who also teach at some other educational establishment or also carry on some other occupation.

One of the Centre's main problems is that of establishing and maintaining contact between teachers and students, despite the distance between them; the problem has stemmed from the increase in the number and variety of students. To deal with it, an effort is being made to speed up marking and reduce the number of students assigned to any one teacher or panel of teachers. For all students, teachers have a sheet, with a photograph, giving their personal data and particulars of their family circumstances and occupations; this is to ensure that each student is an individual and a human being for the teacher and not just a number. Furthermore, teachers and pupils or students are encouraged to correspond with each other, and indeed they often do so. As in ordinary establishments, staff meetings are held at which teachers comment on their students or pupils. From these comments, a real portrait can be built up of a student's or pupil's intellectual qualities and character. These assessments are passed on to each marker.

For the same reasons, efforts are made to establish contacts amongst pupils or students, so as to create relations as similar as possible to those that develop in an ordinary academic establishment. They are encouraged to correspond amongst themselves and also with their teachers. The Centre publishes a new bulletin which is sent out to everybody. It contains letters, samples of students' work, articles by teachers and practical study hints and guidance. In addition, direct personal relations are established *at the supplementary oral and practical classes*³⁶.

In the *United Kingdom* the development of non-profit making correspondence institutions has begun only in recent years. There have for some years been institutions such as the correspondence service of the National and Local Government Officers' Association, which have helped their members to prepare themselves by correspondence for examinations leading to professional promotion. The first independent institution of its kind, however, was the *National Extension College*, established in 1964 in Cambridge. The College absorbed a commercial college (The *University Correspondence College*) and built on this foundation a service which has attempted the development of correspondence education in combination with other media, such as television, face-to-face tuition etc. on a non-profit making basis. The pioneering work of the College in the multi-media field has been documented in a number of publications. One of these is *Teaching at a Distance*³⁷. This gives an account of the first nationally transmitted multi-media course in physics, in which the College collaborated with ABC Television, one of the Independent Television Companies, and the Adult Education Department of Manchester University.

The Open University, to which reference has been made earlier in this report, is the most ambitious attempt to harness correspondence study to the public system of higher education. Although the University is an autonomous institution with a royal charter of its own, it is financed directly by the British Department of Education and Science. It is intended to operate at a level comparable with that of other universities in the United Kingdom and to make university education available to persons above the age of 23 years who would not be able to attend a university full-time. Television and radio programmes are intended to play an important part in the multi-media approach and, to this end, the University has entered into an agreement with the British Broadcasting Corporation for the supply and transmission of ten hours of television programmes each week as well as of a substantial volume of sound radio programmes. For these services the University is paying the BBC, from funds allocated to it by the Department of Education and Science, a sum of £ 1.5 million per annum. The University hopes to have of the order of 25,000 students and was hoping to select these from about 125,000 applicants for places. At the time of writing the total number of applications has not exceeded 26,000, so that it is not certain what the final number of acceptances will be. Since the cost of the establishment and maintenance of the University is high, it seeks one of its justifications in the lower cost per student. It remains to be seen whether this objective will be achieved.

In *Turkey*, as has already been noted, correspondence education is also being provided under the direct auspices of the government. The Correspondence Teaching Centre is responsible both for education by correspondence and for technical publications, information and translation. It is located in the Under-Secretariat for Vocational and Technical

Education of the Ministry of Education. The objectives defined for the Centre are as follows:

"(a) To prepare the students of school age who can not attend schools because of the lack of schools in their district or some other reason, for promotion and graduation examinations.

(b) To prepare those who went to work after finishing a vocational school and want to advance in their profession, or prepare for the graduation examinations of a higher vocational school.

(c) By means of correspondence courses, to make more productive people from those who have passed school age and want to learn a profession or wish to advance in their occupation.

(d) To set up vocational courses by correspondence for those who work in the industrial and economic sectors, at any level or subject as wished by these sectors and thus to increase the productivity of these institutions.

(e) By co-operating with the State and private institutions, to set up training courses by correspondence in the fields needed by those institutions, and thus to be helpful in their work."³⁸

The contracts between students and their colleges

Since students undertaking correspondence courses are not in the ordinary sense *in statu pupillari*, it is important that their relationship to the institution providing them with correspondence tuition should be regulated in a manner appropriate to their maturity and client status. The majority of correspondence colleges at present require their students to enter into a form of contract with them. In the case of the commercial colleges the interest of the colleges lies mainly in ensuring that students pay their fees. On the student's part the interest is mainly in ensuring that the college provides the instalments of a course at the intervals agreed at the beginning of the course, that exercises are marked and returned at the stated times and that other services are performed as undertaken by the colleges.

The problem concerning the contractual arrangements about the payment of fees usually takes two forms. The first is the relationship of the payment of fees to the progress of a course. It has been said of some commercial colleges that their profits derive largely from those students who, having paid the fee for a course, drop out. Since many colleges demand the whole or a substantial proportion of the fee at the commencement of a course, and the wastage rate of students is high, it is inevitable that fees paid to a college on the understanding that they are not returnable if a student drops out must form a substantial part of the income of such colleges. The second aspect is the level of the fees. This is often high. In countries, moreover, where correspondence education does not form part of the public system of education, there is rarely any provision for their remission in the event of drop out. In *Switzerland*, for instance, students preparing for university entrance by

correspondence have to allow for expenditure ranging from Sw. Frs. 3,000-4,000. For those who succeed that expense may be regarded as reasonable, but since only about 7 % of all entrants do so, the expense for the remainder is high, even if, as the Swiss report argues, "The others will have derived some personal or professional benefit from the courses, often through a broadening of their general culture."³⁹

In correspondence systems conducted by governments or with a subsidy from public funds, fees are usually kept well below the economic level in order to encourage students to undertake the courses. At the same time most countries regard it as desirable for students to make some contribution to the cost of provision. The *Turkish* report makes this point: "Most of the students taking the correspondence courses are working people. It has been thought that the students should share some part of the course expenses. For this reason, a certain amount of money is taken from the students taking these courses. In this way the attachment of the students to the courses is increased psychologically."⁴⁰ Public subsidy may be general, as in Turkey where it operates irrespective of the student's ability to pay; or it may be selective as in the *Netherlands*. There, under a law which came into force on 1 January 1967, costs of study may, for instance, be repaid to persons seeking employment. "All those who have lost their jobs, or who are threatened with redundancy are eligible for the repayment of their study expenses. To be eligible, one must satisfy a number of conditions and, once accepted, submit oneself to a sort of inspection which at the same time works as a special form of study attendance. The trainee must take the training which is considered most suitable for him and which offers the best prospect of work in the future. The training should not last unduly long; bona fide teachers and accredited educational institutions must conduct the training course and periodically report on the student's progress... If these conditions have been satisfied, the study expenses can be charged in full to the State; including entrance fee, tuition fee, cost of educational materials used, examinations fees, travelling expenses and any other costs of the particular training."⁴¹

Since the payment of the fee is usually regulated by the terms of the contract between student and institution, these terms are of paramount importance. The report from the *Federal Republic of Germany* identifies three types of contract which are currently in use by correspondence colleges there.

"(a) Non-termination of contract. This presents the prospective student with a big problem, as usually he does not know what standard will be required, the methods used by the institute or, as experience has shown, his own capabilities. If he overrates his own ability and underestimates the standards required, he runs the risk, where no provision is made for denunciation of contract, of becoming merely a 'paying student'.

(b) Limited right of denunciation. Some institutes grant their participants the right to terminate their course prematurely, but subject to

conditions of a financial or technical nature. If, for instance, the condition for termination of contract is the uninterrupted completion of the preceding part of the course, even this must be considered problematical for the person concerned because, as experience has shown, precisely those people in employment who, for subjective or objective reasons, find that they are unable to continue the course without interruption, wish to terminate the course before its completion.

(c) Unrestricted right of denunciation. The possibility of terminating the contract with effect from the end of the current period of study (semester), without the student being required to state the grounds or fulfil any conditions, is in the educational interests of any responsible correspondence institute.

Most correspondence institutes in the *Federal Republic of Germany* either do not allow termination of contract at all or, if they do, hardly ever without restrictions. This has brought strong criticism from the press... and the broadcasting companies... Not until the Spring of 1968 did a few of the larger establishments show any tendency to allow unrestricted termination of contract, partly in view of the inclination of *Land* Ministers of Education towards some form of control,⁴² and partly on account of some publications on the state of correspondence education which appeared in 1967.⁴³ It should be mentioned, however, that a few institutes have for some considerable time — some indeed since their foundation — allowed the possibility of unrestricted termination, thus proving that a proper relationship between student and school can bring material success also."⁴⁴

Similar conditions, albeit on a smaller scale, appear to be operative in *Italy*. Since the Constitutional Court, by a judgment of 19 June 1958, declared invalid articles 3 and 4 of the law of 19 January 1946, under which all educational institutions had to operate under licence of the Ministry of Education, the way has been open for private correspondence colleges to develop. These colleges have tended to make denunciation of contracts difficult for their students, although one college in 1968 decided to absolve its students from signing any contract at all.⁴⁵ In *Switzerland* also "It is increasingly common for correspondence colleges to allow students to withdraw from their course after a certain time (for example, six months) without giving any reasons. A positive result of this is that a student will keep on studying not because he is bound by a contract but because the course is a good one."⁴⁶ In the *Netherlands* the tendency appears to be to fix the withdrawal period at three months.

The growth of public concern about effective control of correspondence institutions has given rise to a good deal of thought about their methods of operation, both among the colleges themselves and on the part of governments. These internal and external control arrangements will be discussed in greater detail in chapter V. In chapter IV the teaching methods employed by correspondence colleges are considered in greater detail.

IV.

TEACHING METHODS

Just as it is difficult to generalise about the institutions which provide correspondence education in different countries of Europe, so it is difficult to sum up in a brief essay the methods which these institutions employ. It is possible broadly to distinguish between "traditional" methods and "modern"; these latter tending to form part of a wider methodological mix, and becoming "multi-media" systems. The rate of development and of experimentation has increased fast in the last ten years or so; thus what was true when the member States submitted their contributions may not be true when this report appears. This chapter therefore confines itself to the examination of some of the general trends and to an illustration of them.

Two useful checklists of activities into which the teaching arrangements of correspondence colleges may be broken down are provided by the *Leidsche Onderwijsinstellingen* in the *Netherlands*. The first describes the steps taken at the Institute in the preparation of a course.

"Preparation of the course/training

1. Appointment of the teacher(s).
2. Drawing up elaborated curriculum and fixing the training-didactics.
3. Fixing the number of lessons and the reading matter for each lesson, fixing of the time-table.
4. Chronological table for the composition of the lessons.
5. Composition of the lessons by the teacher(s).
6. Checking of the manuscripts by the head.
7. Checking of the didactic form and the technical contents of the new lessons by experts not belonging to the permanent teaching-staff of the L.O.I.

8. Lay-out of the lessons and passing them on to the printing-office.
9. Check of the proof-sheets.
10. Delivery of the lessons.
11. Fixation of the organisation of the oral and/or practical complementary part of the training.
12. Preparation of the information and guidance (a.o. composition prospectus).
13. Supply of advice and instructional information. "

The second covers the activities involved in the administration of a correspondence course project.

" The Administering of the course/training

1. Forwarding of the lessons to the trainee.
2. Correction by the teacher(s) of the lessons worked out by the trainees.
3. Qualitative and quantitative check of the achievements of the trainee.
4. Check of the teacher's corrections by the head.
5. Complementary, if any, oral and/or practical lessons.
6. Advice to trainee as to entering an examination.
7. Analysis examination-results of all L.O.I. trainees.
8. Analysis national examination-reports.
9. Possible advice to trainee as to further studies.
10. Continuous checking of the lessons in order to improve them by
 - (a) analysis of the mistakes of the trainees,
 - (b) studying the examination results, teachers and heads listening to the examinations,
 - (c) keeping up professional knowledge and studying the latest developments. "47

These lists indicate the complexity of a correspondence operation if it is thoroughly and conscientiously carried out. They illustrate the elaborate system of checks and balances which has to be built into a situation where neither the tutor nor the student necessarily enters into a face-to-face relationship with the correspondence college at any time. They also, rightly, stress the medium and long range aspect of the planning and updating of courses which is an essential element of correspondence education if it is to fulfil its potential. Lastly the checklists suggest possible lines on which a generally accepted set of standards for correspondence education might be developed, if this should prove to be a desirable long-term objective.

In the next group of sections the different methods will be described in turn, beginning with the traditional usage and moving on to various modern types of activity.

Traditional methods

The textbook and the printed or duplicated course remain the basic instruments of correspondence education in the strict sense.

Current teaching manuals are used most frequently. When no appropriate book exists, however, the College supplies a full course prepared by one of its staff and reproduced on its own premises. A plan of work gives guidance on how to use the textbooks or other material and contains exercises (either taken from the book or course, or prepared by the author of the plan) consisting, as the case may be, of written tests or compositions, practical work (in shorthand and typing, for example) or observation tasks (in scientific and technical subjects, for example).

The correction of the exercises is designed to be as much a means of teaching as of testing. Its three aims are:

- to point out, or make the student discover, where he has gone wrong;
- to explain the nature of his mistakes;
- to supply the explanations necessary to enable the student to correct his mistakes and avoid similar ones in the future.

Corrections may range from a simple explanation to a model answer making maximum use of the elements supplied by the pupil or student. Efforts are made to answer his questions and encourage new ones and to give advice in the difficulties encountered.

The development of modern methods

The refinement of methods of instruction in recent years has come about largely as a result of a more analytical approach to the learning process. This in turn has been influenced by the development of computers and the resultant need to programme, or "teach", computers. The principles of programmed learning have applications in many areas of human education and training.

Programming enables teaching to be dosed according to thoroughly studied and experimentally verified principles; its aims are to encourage active participation by the student, to break down the work into stages, to avoid, if not mistakes (which are often instructive), at least complete set-backs, which are discouraging, and lastly to allow the immediate checking of results. The student can thus work at his own pace at home with greater confidence, under the general educational supervision exercised by the teacher from a distance.

This facility for anticipating the problems and difficulties which students are likely to encounter, and to build into the course a means whereby the students themselves are enabled to deal with them is an important development which is generally applicable to all forms of correspondence education.

Ultimately this trend should lead to a teach-yourself system.

It is significant that in some countries, such as *Sweden*, the use of teach-yourself materials is on the increase. In general, despite the very considerable and time-consuming work involved in preparing such material, it is being produced to an increasing extent, particularly through the efforts of the correspondence institutes. The correspondence method as such is indeed a tentative step on the road to self-instruction material. Three examples will be given of what has been produced and tried out in *Sweden*:

1. *Brevskolan* has prepared a booklet on self-study technique for its individual pupils and study groups.

2. The *Hermods Korrespondens-Institut* has done so much work in this field that since 1967 it has been issuing a special catalogue of courses based on self-instruction methods. It is called *Självinstruerande material* (self-instruction material) and comprises more than 120 pages.

3. The teacher's college in *Malmö*, in co-operation with the Research and Development Division of the Board of Education and with the *Hermods Korrespondens-Institut* as supplier of a large part of the material, has initiated very extensive trials in the completely individualised teaching of mathematics based on self-instruction material. This project, called IMU, has already yielded quite astonishing results in the gaining of time and efficiency by allowing pupils to a greater extent to work at their own speed.

As this project is of particular interest, some additional information may be given on it. It involves more than 6,000 pupils at stages from the intermediate comprehensive school to upper secondary and *Fackskola* level. Some preparatory investigations were made in 1963. Full scale trials have been carried out at the lower levels since 1965 and are expected to be completed by 1968/1969. The project includes an analysis of goals and subject matter, as well as the production and testing of new material. At the upper secondary level the investigations are still at a preparatory stage.

The goals include trials of both material and teaching methods and a study of different types of pupil grouping and different forms of supplementary teacher-a.d. The project thus extends far beyond the use of correspondence teaching material and methods. The interesting point, however, is that it started with material and experience which grew out of correspondence teaching.

To take a completely objective and realistic view, it must be admitted that, however perfect the self-instruction material may be, it can only enable the teaching of subjects which are not too highly specialised.

But the development of modern methods has gone beyond the adoption of programmed learning techniques. The most important developments have been the combination of correspondence with other teaching/learning situations. Some of these have been made possible by technological advances. The expansion in the range and scale of audio-visual media has opened out a whole new dimension in support of correspondence education. The combination of home study with various forms of face-to-face teaching is another, which has become practical as a result of the greater mobility of students and of their greater leisure. It is now possible to conceive, probably for the first time in human history, of a surplus of intellectual energy among the majority of the population of Western Europe. This surplus, which has been achieved by increasing the ratio of capital to labour, happily comes at a time when there is need for some of the surplus energy to be devoted to learning how to cope with the technological developments which have produced the surplus.

Among the methods used to supplement correspondence courses are various types of visual aid which can be used by students individually; open-circuit radio and television; local arrangements for face-to-face teaching and individual tutorial work; group study and short-term residential courses.

Audio-visual aids for individual use

These learning aids take many forms. From simple illustrations in, or associated with, correspondence courses they lead via specially designed textbooks synchronised with the programme of a correspondence course, gramophone records and sound tapes to radiovision which is a combination of sound tape and slides. Film and, in the near future, the magnetic tape or film cassette which can be viewed on an ordinary television screen, also fall into this group of support material for correspondence courses.

In some countries, certain private colleges supplement their correspondence education by manuals, gramophone records and tape-recordings. This combination is applied above all to the postal tuition of languages. Nowadays, the printed matter of a course is backed up by tape-recordings as well as records; some of the tapes replace records, others are recorded by the student himself and returned for comment by teachers specially trained in phonetics, the object being to improve the student's pronunciation and intonation.

It is an interesting fact that two correspondence education institutes in Sweden have produced films and audio-visual equipment on study technique for individuals and groups.

The great advantage which media such as these have over open-circuit radio or television transmissions is that they are much more flexible in use. The student is not tied to a particular time-table; moreover he has the possibility of using the audio-visual aid a second time if he does not understand what it is intended to teach.

In the *United Kingdom* an experiment was conducted in the teaching of physics by a combination of open-circuit television, correspondence, support material, an experiments kit and face-to-face teaching. The ascertainable figures for the use of the different media were as follows:

average television audience (estimated)	250,000
purchasers of the support book	8,941
purchasers of the experiments kit	3,970
purchasers of the correspondence course	680 ⁴⁸

The Open University similarly intends to rely heavily on aids for use by the individual student. In addition it is placing more reliance than originally anticipated on the use by students of local study centres where aids for individual use will be available as well as general counselling and specialist tutorial supervision.

The CNTE in *France* has been developing audio-lingual media, particularly by increasing the amount of support material in the form of tape-recordings for language teaching.

Texts relating to work done by correspondents are recorded on tapes. Questions follow with blanks allowing the pupil to answer and practise oral fluency. The tapes are sent back to the teachers for correction and return.

In a second type of recorded drill, the pauses on the tape are supplemented by self-correcting exercises; this cuts out the delays inevitably involved in sending tapes back and forth.

As from October 1970, tapes are to be used in the same way for a course in French in the *pre-baccalauréat* year⁵³.

Open-circuit radio and television

In the last ten years substantial efforts have been made to harness open-circuit television to educational uses. The educational use of radio is of course of much longer standing. The story of the rise and decline of the use of radio for organised adult education in the *United Kingdom* is well told in the second volume of Professor Asa Briggs' *History of the BBC*⁴⁹.

Having established schools broadcasting the BBC developed courses for adults which were to be linked with local listening groups. A good deal of public support went into this development and at first it was reasonably successful. In the winter of 1930-31 there were over 1,000

listening groups in existence. But the arrangement did not prove a success. As Professor Briggs points out "There were many reasons, both for the failure to expand and for the ultimate decline. First the great successes in the field of school broadcasting diverted more and more professional BBC effort in the provinces towards schools broadcasting rather than adult education... Second, whereas the success of schools broadcasting depended above all else on co-operation with the teachers and local education authorities, the success of adult education broadcasting depended upon reaching agreement with a number of rival bodies... Third... the place of adult education in the BBC's central organisation was never secure."⁵⁰

These problems of co-ordination and of conflicting institutional pressures have usually meant that it has been difficult to reconcile the interests of the broadcasting organisations which deal with large *general* audiences with those of the educators whose interest tends to be in small *specialist* audiences. The prerequisite of success has usually been a high level policy decision to use certain frequencies and production facilities primarily, if not exclusively, for educational purposes, in spite of the "waste" of air space which this may be said to entail.

In Sweden, certain television programmes have been organised jointly by the Broadcasting Corporation, the correspondence institutes and the teacher training organisations. These programmes comprise subjects such as the new school system, the Swedish Constitution and the problem of developing countries. With the co-operation of teacher training organisations, a parallel series of study groups and seminars has been arranged on the same subjects.

Two radio broadcasts, combining programmed learning and correspondence education, attracted even greater interest. They featured foreign languages and "Further Studies in Swedish", that is to say Swedish language and literature at upper comprehensive school level (a standard which most adults never attained).

The broadcasts entitled "Further Studies in Swedish" consisted of 63 half-hour programmes, broadcast twice weekly, from September 1966 to May 1967. Each programme was broadcast in the evening and repeated the following day, so that every student would have the chance to listen at an hour which suited him while also having enough time to revise the contents of the programme before the next broadcast. All students, including those who followed the course solely by radio, were supplied with a textbook. This contained full instructions as well as the texts around which the programmes were built. The correspondence lessons were so designed that missing a programme did not bar one from completing the course. Three systems were possible: individual study, membership of a correspondence study group or a combination of both methods. Certificates were awarded to those taking part in the course. *As the course progressed, a study was carried out on the participants, the difficulties encountered and the results achieved.*

In various countries, there is an increasingly pronounced interaction between radio and television education and correspondence courses. It mainly takes the form of publications and exercises common to both methods.

In *Spain*, this combination has a triple objective: basic literacy, preparation for the Certificate of Primary Studies and special subjects. 15,000 students, whose work is regularly checked, are following courses of instruction. In *Italy*, the educational activities of RAI TV are growing in importance, although there is so far no real co-operation with correspondence colleges, owing to the completely independent status of these colleges. In Hesse, in the *Federal Republic of Germany*, there is the *Funkkolleg*, which combines correspondence courses with educational radio, and the *Telekolleg* which combines television broadcasts, documentary material and group work. A similar system has been organised in Bavaria following an enquiry which revealed that a large section of the population wished to follow courses giving more than simply general information. The *Telekolleg* is open to anyone possessing the certificate awarded at the end of the period of compulsory education; there are no age limits. Support material is sent in advance, every four to six weeks, to all participants who have filled in the enrolment form. The printed matter for the entire course (lasting approximately two and a half years) amounts to between 9,000 and 10,000 pages. Specially designed to accompany this type of instruction, the first part is intended for use during the broadcasts (lesson notes), a second part gives more detailed information aimed at consolidating the student's knowledge of the programme topic and the last part consists of correcting exercises and others to be returned to the tutor. Students pay a nominal sum for this material.

The *Telekolleg* organises sessions of group work lasting for five hours, which normally take place on a Saturday morning. Groups are kept as small as possible (approximately 15 to 20 participants) and meet in premises near students' homes. Such groups have been working since January 1967 in 136 Bavarian towns. After each broadcast, participants are invited to study at home with the help of supporting material and to complete the exercises designed to check their personal progress. Every three weeks, they must send their group tutor a piece of work on a subject set in the programme material. The tutors collect, annotate and return this work to the students, with whom they have the chance to discuss details at the *Telekolleg* group sessions.

In a number of cases, television merely acts as an adjunct to the correspondence course; in other cases, however, it plays the chief role.

The example of the DIFF (*Deutsches Institut für Fernstudien*) illustrates present developments in this field⁵¹. The aim of the Institute is to provide permanent instruction for school teachers in order to make

available to them the latest findings of basic research in their own special subjects. There exist courses in English, biology, physics, chemistry and education. The DIFF also runs special courses to qualify teachers for promotion, (for example, by preparing them for the secondary school or college teachers' examination). It allows those lacking certain qualifications to follow a supplementary course of instruction in order to obtain them. There is for instance a biology course for primary and secondary school teachers who are not specialists in the subject. Civics, labour law and Protestant theology are also offered. Certain of these courses may be considered as models of this type of education and can be used by other professions requiring university level instruction, as has been contemplated by the German Science Council.

In carrying out its task the DIFF uses a combination of television and correspondence education. It is trying out various methods of using postal tuition and television in the first years of university education.

This may be done:

(a) by replacing oral introductory courses by correspondence courses, especially in the case of general subjects. This would ease the task of the university and allow courses to be intensified and rationalised (and also, in the opinion of DIFF, enable the period of study to be shortened);

(b) by arranging correspondence courses for final year pupils in schools and colleges and for those already in employment who wish to familiarise themselves with certain subjects before studying them at university;

(c) by broadcasting university level courses of general interest intended for a very wide audience (popular education of "people's university" standard);

(d) by providing extra tuition by correspondence in Latin, Greek, Hebrew and statistics and, more generally, transition courses in subjects taught at university which do not form part of the secondary school curriculum;

(e) by helping students to prepare themselves more efficiently for examinations, especially degree examinations, and by providing considerable follow-up material for practical work.

In order to attain these objectives, the DIFF intends to employ psychologists and radio and television experts as well as programmed learning specialists.

In France the main instrument for open-circuit television and radio for educational purposes is *Radio-Télévision Scolaire*, which "comes, appropriately, under the Ministry of Education; however it handles only part of the Ministry's programme, and does not cover higher education nor, and with more reason, the programmes sponsored by the other Ministries, such as Agriculture, Social Affairs etc. The RTS therefore

is far from covering what can be generally termed the field of educational radio and television. Nevertheless it is increasingly developing its activities in the direction of *éducation permanente*.⁵² RTS co-operates closely with CNTE. Among their most recent activities in the adult education field are three series, due for transmission from October 1970:

- Self-expression in French (middle secondary standard);
- Mathematics (for the professional engineer's diploma);
- Business management (for heads of small businesses, managerial staff, small craftsmen).

Television broadcasts under preparation — 16 series each year — will be accompanied by printed follow-up material and exercises which will be corrected by the CNTE.

Each broadcast is aimed at three types of public:

1. those who follow the broadcasts with the help of the programme notes but do not do the exercises;
2. those who follow the broadcasts with the help of the printed follow-up material and who do the exercises to be corrected by the CNTE;
3. those who are unable to listen to the broadcasts and who work exclusively from the printed material and do the same exercises as group 2.⁵³

This experiment, which it is hoped will increase in scale, will enable the actual impact of the visual and printed elements and of the exercises to be measured. It is, as far as is known, the first attempt of its kind in France. The progress of the different audiences, especially group No. 2, will be followed by a team of psychologists and teachers, who will study reactions to the triple combination. Before each new broadcast there will be a three-minute survey of the main mistakes and misunderstandings encountered by the teachers correcting the previous set of exercises.⁵⁴

The combination of correspondence and face-to-face teaching

The most persistent objection to correspondence education is that it deprives the student (and, for that matter the teacher) from what is regarded as an essential ingredient of the learning process, namely the lively encounter between student and teacher. There is no doubt that the concept of the Platonic dialogue is deeply embedded in European educational theory, though perhaps it has not always been applied in practice.

It is not surprising therefore that those responsible for the development of correspondence education have sought to apply this principle in so far as this has not been made impossible by the nature of their operations. Clearly, if a student could, and would, attend regularly at a place of education, there would be no need to send him lessons by post.

Thus face-to-face tuition, when related to correspondence education, is a supplementary activity, occurring at best at a frequency which would not in itself be sufficient to enable a student to complete his course.

Periods of face-to-face tuition take the form, in certain countries, of short pre-examination sessions. The combination of correspondence tuition and courses of face-to-face teaching is particularly suitable for those exercising a liberal profession or a craft, whose working conditions allow them to fit in periodic residential courses.

One example drawn from the *Federal Republic of Germany* is the *Studiengemeinschaft Darmstadt*, which offers an engineering course combining correspondence methods with seminars.

Correspondence tuition is sometimes combined with adult evening classes, mainly in order to help students pass examinations and obtain certificates (classes at various secondary school levels, including final year).

In *Sweden*, there are combined correspondence and evening institutes which cater for individual study, group study and teacher-led tuition. Elsewhere, these same facilities are offered by adult education centres in collaboration with correspondence colleges.

Generally speaking, the most respectable institutions combine postal tuition with other activities. In the *Netherlands*, for example, there are scores of correspondence courses incorporating supplementary oral tuition either at evening classes or on Saturdays. This oral tuition, which has proved very effective, involves much organisation, more complicated administrative arrangements and considerable extra work for the teachers. The "Leiden Secondary Evening School", which prepares students for State examinations and secondary education certificates, has for several years been using the correspondence courses provided by the *Leidsche Onderwijsinstellingen*, whose courses are specially geared to these aims. Thus no other text-book is required. In exchange, the correspondence college uses the subject matter of the evening courses in preparing its own pupils for the above-mentioned examinations. This form of collaboration has enabled the evening institute, for its part, to reduce its classes from three to two evenings per week.

In the *Netherlands*, again, extra practical work accompanying postal tuition in certain complex technical subjects like electronics is carried out in a vehicle specially fitted with all the necessary apparatus, which travels to areas where there are pupils who cannot attend the practical sessions at the correspondence institute.

Other forms of face-to-face tuition take place in the student's home. This facility is made available above all to students unable to travel

owing to illness or disability. Individual coaching in the home is provided in *France* as an extra service by teachers appointed locally by home-study institutions, and backs up the main tuition received by correspondence, radio or TV. This coaching helps to fill in gaps. It overcomes the difficulties normally encountered by any average pupil. Sometimes, the coach himself chooses the exercises and then corrects them. The amount of initiative left to the local teacher varies according to the standard of the tuition, the number of subjects under study and their degree of specialisation.

Coaching may occasionally be done collectively in hospitals and convalescent homes, in which case it virtually amounts to supplementary education.

Numerous pupils and students in sanatoria benefit from on-the-spot help from local teachers, or possibly members of the teaching profession who are themselves undergoing treatment (in which case they are attached for administrative purposes to the nearest secondary school). To give improved service of this type, "medico-social stations" have been set up in some towns. A teacher or team of teachers visits pupils in order to revise orally the subject matter of the correspondence course and thus make it more easily digestible; a few hours of extra group teaching per week is sometimes arranged for pupils who are not physically handicapped.

A combination of on-the-spot practical training and theoretical postal tuition is the rule in commercial and technical further education courses, especially those organised at the request of certain large firms (and government departments). Public bodies, private companies and schools also make use of this method. Frequently the theoretical instruction and the practical work are simply juxtaposed, but increasing efforts are being made to integrate both aspects to give homogeneous and thorough training.

In *Norway* also "supervised correspondence study has come into being through combined education (correspondence education combined with oral instruction) for *realskole* and matriculation examinations, commercial and technical courses. Such combined education has in recent years been in considerable demand in places where the ordinary schools have been unable to cope with the increasing number of young people wanting further education. A committee of experts has assisted the government in the control of this special form of education."⁵⁵

The combination of correspondence with group study

A further element whose absence the critics of correspondence education have noted, and rightly so, is the encounter between student and student. It has of course to be recognised by the proponents of group

methods that the contribution of group activity to the learning process is by no means free from ambiguity. The British study of students preparing by correspondence for degrees and comparable qualifications showed that a substantial minority of the students concerned indicated their preference for studying by themselves rather than in company with other students; a further substantial proportion did not find the absence of class contacts a hardship⁵⁶.

On the other hand the support of a group of like-minded people working with the same object in view can clearly be of substantial help to some people. For this reason, the system of tuition in small groups or study circles has deeply penetrated almost every layer of the adult population in some countries.

Certain correspondence courses are tailored to suit this system. The *Brevskolan*, a Swedish correspondence institute owned by a number of popular education movements, has specialised in offering material which it attempts to keep up to date and adapted to the needs of study circles.

Common tuition centres also exist, where classes resemble collective coaching sessions. The extra tuition given at these on-the-spot group sessions (for experimental or practical work) forms part of the correspondence course, but is organised independently, on the initiative of the local organiser. The local instructors or teachers also advise their pupils on theoretical work received by correspondence. Complete integration, although it would be desirable and would allow the two teaching methods to interact, does not yet appear to have been achieved.

In Norway, 5,401 correspondence course study circles are in operation, involving 42,315 students.

Sweden offers particularly significant examples of this form of collaboration between correspondence education, professional societies, adult education associations and trade unions. Various types of course in the "people's schools" are designed to take students to a more advanced stage of specialisation. These courses are backed up by private study, which may be combined with correspondence tuition. It has moreover become a custom for educational associations or other organisations to order a particular course, whose subject matter is geared to a specific educational standard, from "their" correspondence institute or from an independent body. Representatives of the educational association and of the correspondence institute, with an author or experts on the subject, form working parties which decide what form the course is to take and also deal with questions raised by:

- the distribution of teaching material,
- the training of instructors,
- lectures on the chosen topics,
- the preparation of support material, particularly for group leaders.

Especially in recent years, this method of co-operation has led to reforms in teaching methods and in organisation in the field of adult education. The main trade union organisations, for example, have taken the lead in providing their members with study courses of various standards. In the long run this will undoubtedly result in more differentiated and specialised forms of study and a broadening of curricula to embrace new groups of subjects.

In *Sweden*, again, popular education movements co-operate with professional bodies in making extensive use of correspondence education methods adapted for group study. It used to be the general rule for each study group to do its exercises jointly. Although this practice still predominates, other forms are now being introduced: individual studies or individually submitted answers, based however on study and preparation of the correspondence material, supplemented by group discussions, lectures or classes.

In numerous countries, it is the trade unions, local government (*Sweden*) and other associations which have organised the most comprehensive forms of study with the most clearly defined aims: for example, the training of trade union staff, senior local government officials and youth leaders.

Some countries are trying to find the most effective combinations of correspondence education and other forms of tuition; in others, the correspondence education provided by professional bodies is more or less imposed on the worker, and the search for the most appropriate method is not considered to be of outstanding importance.

In *France*, "group centres" have been set up for CNTE students (adolescents or adults) who are unable to obtain this supplementary training at their place of work. At present, there are some sixty such centres handling 1,500 students.

The centres are located in technical schools or colleges which make their workshops and laboratories available for one day every three or four weeks. These practical day-courses, organised at regular intervals, are occasionally supplemented by short courses lasting two to six days organised by the group centres. Such courses can only be attended by workers who receive special leave, with or without pay, from their employers.

In *Switzerland*, another form of combined correspondence and group tuition has developed in recent years. The "academic association", founded 13 years ago, is by far the most important institution in Switzerland providing alternative training facilities. As an illustration, its syllabus is described below:

"Examinations are prepared over a total of 7 semesters. The first three of these are devoted to correspondence tuition, with six-monthly written and oral examinations and, as an option, short evening seminars.

From the fourth semester onwards, extra classes are held at weekends. Their purpose is not to continue study of the subject-matter, which can be done more rationally by correspondence. They have other aims:

(a) Systematic revision and exercises, practical tuition, experiments in the physics laboratories and in seminars. As the students are already familiar with the subject-matter through postal tuition, the foundation is already laid for fruitful discussion between teacher and class.

(b) Support on the individual student and furtherance of his progress by the whole class. This personal contact is very helpful in eradicating weaknesses and strengthening the will to succeed."⁵⁷

There is here, clearly, a wide range of opportunities which are only now beginning to be explored. As the cost of education rises, a combination of media which enables the student to reach the same educational level is bound to assume greater importance in the years to come.

The combination of correspondence study with short-term residential periods

The third variant of the theme of the combination of oral and correspondence study is the residential course during which students not only study together but live together. This type of provision is valued particularly in those countries where opportunities for residential education have traditionally played an important part in education, i.e. Scandinavia and Britain.

In *Britain* the tradition of the residential university, established by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, has been a powerful influence on educational theory and practice. It has been regarded as important that students and teachers should know each other not only in their occupational roles, but as persons; that they should not only work together but spend some of their leisure time together; and that they should not only have formal educational experiences, but the informal opportunities for learning which come from social intercourse with persons engaged in a similar learning process.

This view of education, which in practice has in *Britain* been a privilege of the upper classes, found a more democratic application in Scandinavia: "although Grundtvig's conception of the Folk High Schools, of which his disciples founded the first in *Denmark* in 1844, was influenced in part by what he knew of collegiate life in English universities, these colleges for adults were as little an imitation of English institutions as the Danish Co-operative Movement was a copy of the Rochdale movement from which it drew its principles."⁵⁸ However tenuous the relationship, the emphasis on the value of the residential setting has penetrated deep into the concept of continuing education in

all these countries. The British short-term residential colleges for adults derived their inspiration from a return movement of ideas a century after Grundtvig took English models to Denmark. Their development in the late 1940's and 1950's drew heavily on the Scandinavian models, many of which had by then moved a fair distance from their original objectives.

The value of the residential setting is assumed not only in the general educational system, but in relation to specialist in-service training for a wide range of occupations. There are in *Britain* today few industries, branches of the public service or professions which do not maintain short-term residential institutions of their own.

Thus it is not surprising that the development of multi-media educational systems should seek to combine correspondence education with opportunities for residential study. This particular combination is, in theory, particularly appropriate in view of the element of geographical dispersion which is one of the justifications for correspondence education. It implies that there are not enough correspondence students within easy reach of each other and of the correspondence college, for them to meet on a non-residential basis. Accordingly the provision of opportunities for students from different parts of a country, who are pursuing the same correspondence course, to meet for a period of common study, is an obvious development.

In the event, this theoretical model is not so easily translated into practice. As the account of one such experiment in the *United Kingdom* relates, "the major difficulty encountered in running the (residential) course (in connection with a television-cum-correspondence series) was that the students' background knowledge, demands and needs were very varied. Inevitably, a short course like this was intensive, and in danger of being over-intensive, especially as the tutor tried to answer all the individual problems of students, which ranged over a very wide area."⁵⁹ Unless the residential element is built very firmly into the course as a whole, it is also found that the response from students is not substantial. Another course director of a similar project reported "It was disappointing that not very many people took advantage of the course; there were only about 20 students. These, however, covered a remarkable variety of people who had taken the course for a remarkable variety of reasons. Some wanted to top up the physics that they were already doing; some wanted to understand the application of physics to ordinary phenomena, not having done any physics at all before. The one common quality was keenness, but obviously people would not have come if they had not really wanted to."⁶⁰

In view of these early experiences the Open University in Britain is making attendance at a fortnight's residential summer school each year a compulsory element in the multi-media package provided for its students.

Conclusion

The brief description and discussion in this chapter of different teaching methods and combinations of methods has done little more than to open up a subject which deserves much fuller treatment. It is to be hoped that such a fuller study will be undertaken on the basis of this general survey.

The next chapter deals with some of the problems of control and assessment which arise as and when correspondence education begins to assume a place in the mainstream of educational provision of a country.

V.

PROBLEMS OF CONTROL AND ASSESSMENT

As long as correspondence education operated in the margins of educational provision, and as long as it was of little concern to the State whether its citizens improved their educational attainment or not, there was little incentive for any public concern with the standards of correspondence colleges. The reason for the development of correspondence education under private enterprise auspices has been discussed in chapter I. It was noted there that the growth of public interest in the control of standards has gone hand in hand, in a number of countries, with direct intervention by governments in the provision of correspondence education.

When questions of control and assessment of correspondence education are under discussion, two issues have to be decided:

- (a) What aspects of correspondence education should come within any control arrangements which may be made? and
- (b) By whom should any control arrangements be administered?

What should be controlled?

The attempts which have been made in recent years, or are currently under discussion, to establish control procedures for correspondence education display a wide measure of agreement about the aspects of such education which are susceptible to control. For instance, the draft treaty signed by the Standing Conference of Ministers of Culture of the several *Länder* of the *German Federal Republic* on 30 October 1969 establishes a federal control agency which will examine correspondence courses submitted to it for approval on two counts:

1. whether the course concerned provides adequate and appropriate preparation, as regards content and educational method, for public examinations which are recognised in at least one of the constituent *Länder* of the Federal Republic; and

2. whether the contractual arrangements entered into by students, and in particular the withdrawal provisions, are suitable⁶¹.

Control of content and methods

Criteria of adequacy and appropriateness of content and method are nowhere precisely defined. But the search for suitable regulations or legislation has raised the question of the exact nature of what is traditionally called correspondence education or home study courses and has resulted in attempts to furnish a precise legal definition.

Educational methods combining various forms of documentation, information and teaching have been found to be involved. For these to warrant the name of education, three features would appear to be necessary:

(a) well ordered, graduated support material covering the whole subject under study and adapted to the student's standard;

(b) an accompanying study programme, with practice exercises and a correction system which involves not only marking or checking but also advice, explanations and a genuine dialogue with the teacher;

(c) finally (especially for vocational education), consolidation of the theoretical postal tuition by on-the-spot practical work wherever necessary. This can be provided if need be by other organisations (firms and technical schools) but must be co-ordinated with the study programme.

The qualifications of the staffs of correspondence colleges are a factor which closely affects the nature of the provision described above. Thus there is among the directives given to the *Norwegian* Correspondence School Council under the terms of the Act of 12 November 1948 a requirement that the Council shall have submitted to it "details of the director and teachers, their technical qualifications (degrees and subjects or practice) and salary conditions (whether full-time position with yearly salary, time rates or rates on a piece work basis). The information is to cover the calendar year and should be sent in during January each year."⁶²

The draft law on correspondence education in the *Netherlands* contains the most detailed provisions yet devised for the control of the content and method of correspondence courses. For this reason it is useful to quote it here at some length. The main provisions are as follows:

" A.1. Authors and correctors

The authors of courses and the correctors of exercises done by the students shall hold certificates, as indicated by the Minister of Education and Sciences, analogous to the requirements for (oral) school education; or, if there is no such analogy, shall hold testimonials of skill and suitability acceptable to the Minister.

A.2. Contents of courses

1. The Courses shall, down to the smallest detail (language, subdivision, educational handling of subject matter, preliminary training required, drawings or illustrations, and exercises), be so adapted to the educational level of the students that the latter have reasonable prospects of attaining their objectives.

2. Exact data shall be given with every course concerning:

- (a) examination requirement or objective,
- (b) requirement of level of education and preliminary training,
- (c) duration of the course concerned, with a normal time-table based on a specific number of hours per week.

3. Where necessary, each course shall include a number of exercises, examination questions, problems, or other tests based on the exposition of the course.

4. Where necessary, the course shall specify the books and/or literature required, with a statement of their cost.

5. If the students have also to complete oral or practical assignments to attain their objective this fact shall be made known to them unequivocally, or this type of preparation shall be provided for with a statement of its cost.

6. To prevent obsolescence, the courses shall be brought up to date regularly.

7. The school shall, at least in so far as it is able to do so, carefully record the results of examinations taken by its students, for which it has trained the students but which are not held by the school itself, and shall annually send these records to the Minister of Education and Sciences." ⁶³

Control of organisation and contracts

Control of the relations between the correspondence college and its clients is the second area of control in which governments are now

taking an interest. The German model has already been mentioned. The two main subjects with which those concerned to control the colleges deal are methods of recruitment and the contractual provisions. Indeed it may be said that the main legal problem posed by private correspondence courses is essentially a matter of the contract.

Contracts are frequently offered through exaggerated publicity or by means of canvassing. This latter practice is particularly open to criticism. In most cases, canvassers have no educational training and are paid on a commission basis. They contact young people who have failed by traditional methods of study, or get in touch with ill-informed families and lead them to believe that the correspondence college will enable them to fulfil all their educational aspirations. The student-to-be signs his contract and pays his first instalment. It is only then he realises that he has bought a pig in a poke.

There is rarely any provision for cancelling the contract. The prospective student has no idea of the standard of the course he is meant to follow, the methods employed by the institution or his own capabilities. If he has overestimated his powers and underestimated the difficulty of the chosen course and if there is no provision in the contract for cancellation, he runs the risk of paying for several years' tuition which he does not in fact receive.

Sometimes there do exist limited possibilities of cancellation. Some institutions allow their students to terminate courses prematurely, but only if certain financial and technical conditions are observed. For example, one condition of cancellation is that the course shall have been followed up to that point without a break. This condition can be very difficult to meet. Experience has shown that it is the very people who, for objective or subjective reasons, are unable to follow the course without interruption, who wish to abandon their studies before completing the contract.

Every correspondence student should automatically have the right to terminate his contract at the end of each period of study (one semester), without having to give reasons or meet a host of conditions. In several countries, various press campaigns have had to be waged to obtain any improvement in the system of educational contracts. In general terms, it is imperative that the legal void which at present makes this kind of confidence trick possible in various countries should be filled. Society has the duty to protect adolescents and adults who, in all good faith, seek to improve their qualifications and increase their knowledge without abandoning themselves from work or their home.

Again, the provisions of the Dutch draft law appear to be the most complete statement of requirements which can reasonably be made of correspondence colleges in their dealings with students:

" B.1. Recruitment

1. Recruitment shall be conducted in accordance with the truth.
2. Recruitment shall be conducted in accordance with the dignity of education.
3. The school shall not give any presents, of whatever nature, nor shall it make any promises to do so.
4. The school shall not use salesmen, except in very special cases and when sanctioned by the Minister of Education and Sciences.

B.2. Mutual obligations

1. The contract shall impose only mutual obligations which conform to reasonable requirements.
2. Before any contract is concluded, the prospective student shall be informed, where necessary with explanations and illustrations, of the data mentioned under A.2. — Contents of courses, 2, 4 and 5, and A.3. — Correction, 1, 4, 5 and 7, and of the financial conditions both for the course fee and for any necessary additional costs.
3. A prospective student whose preliminary training is insufficient shall only be enrolled after he has been informed of the possible consequences of this insufficiency upon his admission to the examination and the award of the certificate, and after he has explicitly confirmed that he is still willing to follow the correspondence course.
4. The application forms and other documents relating to the contract shall be couched in easily-understood terms.
5. The regulations concerning premature termination of a contract shall, without detriment to what is prescribed under item B.1. above, require approval by the Minister of Education and Sciences. In no case shall the financial conditions prohibit a student from terminating his contract, subject to the school's right, to claim any amount still owing to it at the moment of termination. If the accreditation of the school is withdrawn, the student shall be allowed to terminate his contract immediately without any obligation on his part. The possibilities of premature termination of the contract, with details of the relevant conditions, shall be stated on the application form.
6. Communication between school and student, otherwise than through the exchange of lessons and exercises sent in by the student, shall be freely available: both before enrolment, in the form of advice about studies etc.; and during the course in the case of complaints, insufficient progress etc. The rule here is that the school shall take the initiative in maintaining adequate communications with its students.

C. Correspondence Schools

1. The directors of the school shall be persons of good reputation.
2. Every director shall, if required, submit a certificate of good character.
3. One or more educational authorities shall have a vote in the management of the school.
4. The school shall continuously be in a position to meet its obligations.
5. If practical lessons are given, or if oral assignments are necessary to supplement the correspondence lessons, the rooms provided shall comply with the reasonable requirements." ⁶⁴

In *Switzerland* similar requirements apply. A correspondence course is not recognised unless it fulfils the following conditions:

- No ostentatious publicity is to be employed making exaggerated promises of success.
- The student must be informed of the minimum educational standard required to tackle successfully the course applied for.
- The educational material sent by the college must genuinely correspond to the subject dealt with.
- The exercises done by the student must be regularly corrected.
- The student must be given well-informed advice on how best to specialise in his chosen branch.
- Before signing the contract the applicant must be informed of the amount of the fees and the services he has the right to expect in exchange.
- On request, the student must be sent a list of the authors and correctors of a course, giving their names, qualifications and occupations.
- It is forbidden for representatives, so-called "counsellors" or "cultural advisers" to call on prospective students with the aim of persuading them to enter into a contract for a correspondence course.
- Students must be allowed to terminate contracts without giving reasons after a period of at least six months. In the case of serious shortcomings on the part of the student, the contract may be terminated at any time by either of the two parties.

Where all correspondence education is carried on under the auspices of the government, as in *Turkey*, or where the government organises its own correspondence work and does not take any interest in the commercial colleges, as in *France*, the problem of control is a good deal simpler. The public sector is under the same guidance in educational and administrative respects as the rest of the public educational system. This, of course, does not necessarily ensure high standards. It does ensure,

however, that such inadequacies as there are do not arise from the primacy of the profit motive over the interest of the students. Since, moreover, publicly conducted correspondence systems are of fairly recent origin in most countries, those operating them tend to be open to new ideas and to have the opportunity to learn from the mistakes of the more established providers of correspondence education.

Having identified the points at which control of correspondence education is necessary, it now remains to consider the authorities which exercise this control.

Systems of control

Various formulas are possible:

(a) *self-imposed control by the institutes themselves*

By this system, the correspondence education institutions themselves set up joint machinery to control the quality of the teaching material, staff qualifications, the terms of contracts and, as far as possible, publicity.

(b) *State control*

In certain countries, a more or less tight system of official control has been set up or is under study.

(c) *joint control*

Here the controlling body is composed of representatives of the public and private sectors and acts in an advisory capacity. This system allows the controlling body greater freedom of movement and action.

The evidence at present available suggests that the trend in arrangements for control is for a beginning to be made by means of a self-control system by the commercial colleges themselves. In the *United Kingdom* there are two such groupings, the Association of British Correspondence Colleges and the Cleaver-Hulme Group.

In the *Federal Republic of Germany* a similar system of voluntary control is run by the *Bundesverband Deutscher Fernlehrinstitute* in Munich, the *Verband Deutscher Fernschulen* in Würzburg and the *Deutscher Fernschulrat*.

Similar groupings exist in other countries. They usually make for an element of professionalism in correspondence education and as such are to be welcomed. Mr. I.J. Sloos, Honorary President of the European Council for Education by Correspondence has described this development. "Until comparatively few years ago few European governments intervened or even interested themselves in correspondence education; the leaders of correspondence schools were left unaided in their efforts to broaden the impact of education and protect the public against abuses.

National associations were formed among the better schools in each country, with a view to giving correspondence education the standing it deserves and by exchanging experiences to improve their general standard in the field of education. At the same time, these associations of good schools brought pressure to bear upon less satisfactory ones, as their growing influence and known high standards led previously ineligible schools to reform their methods and qualify for membership." ⁶⁵

More recently the correspondence colleges have begun to organise themselves internationally. The European Council for Correspondence Education was founded in October 1962 at Leiden in the *Netherlands* and soon attracted the larger and better established commercial colleges throughout Europe. As part of its activities the Council drafted a code of ethics to be observed by its members. This was approved at a meeting of the Council in Barcelona in June 1967 ⁶⁶. Among the articles of this code two have caused a measure of controversy. The first is article 3:

"The school shall not employ representatives, however designated, on a commission basis."

The use of representatives using door-step selling techniques was prohibited by the Council, which in this respect appears to have moved ahead of a number of correspondence colleges in Europe. In recent years there has, moreover, been a growing tendency for correspondence colleges based in North America to move into the European market, either directly or by taking over European firms. American practice does not prohibit the use of representatives, and it is not therefore surprising that American practices have begun to be applied in Europe. Because of the requirement of the CEC banning the use of representatives, certain European colleges decided to establish one organisation of their own, whose code does not forbid the use of representation. Thus the European Home Study Council came into being in 1968. This Council is modelled on the National Home Study Council of the USA and its objects are:

"1. to promote co-operation, exchange ideas and research results between the members themselves and maintain contacts with educational, governmental and non-governmental organisations;

2. to promote establishment of and co-operation with national home study councils;

3. to have a professionally run, permanent educational home study and research centre in Europe." ⁶⁷

The second controversial article of the code of ethics of the CEC is that concerning withdrawal from courses:

"The school shall allow students to terminate their courses before completion in case of illness, unemployment or for any other adequate reason."

The general terms of this article enable the members of CEC to accept it. More recently, however, an attempt to tighten the provisions

of this and of other criteria of conduct of correspondence colleges in Europe by a new body, the *Conseil pour la Promotion de l'Enseignement par Correspondance*, has disclosed substantial differences of practice both among member organisations of the CEC and as between them, members of the EHSC and correspondence institutions conducted under official auspices. In order to cover all these interests a modified version has been adopted by COPEC which runs as follows:

"In no case shall financial liability exist in respect of any period longer than three months after termination of a contract; before a prospective student commits himself the college shall inform him of the duration of the course." ⁶⁸

Systems of joint control

The creation of COPEC on the European plane illustrates a development which is taking place in a number of countries as correspondence education moves closer to the public systems of education. This development is the involvement in the control operation of governmental or at least non-correspondence interests. The code which COPEC is currently attempting to develop is initiated by persons who have no personal interest in commercial correspondence colleges. An element of external influence has been introduced.

A similar development is currently taking place in the *United Kingdom*. Like other forms of post-school education provided by independent bodies, correspondence colleges in England and Wales are not subject to any sort of control by the Secretary of State for Education and Science. There has, however, been discussion from time to time of the possibility of their registration and inspection by the Department of Education and Science or alternatively the making of voluntary arrangements involving some independent regulating body.

The Secretary of State decided in December 1964 to invite the two largest bodies representing correspondence colleges (the Association of British Correspondence Colleges and Cleaver-Hulme Ltd.) to consider the possibility of establishing an independent accrediting body which would include representatives of the colleges as well as independent members and whose operations would be financed by the accredited colleges. The decision to explore the possibility of a voluntary accreditation scheme, rather than some statutory scheme of compulsory registration and inspection, was based in part on the view that Parliament and the public would be likely to accept the exercise of the power to withhold recognition from colleges only in the case of the most flagrant abuse. This would have meant that the standards for registration would inevitably be low. The price of eliminating the worst abuse would have been the absence of any means of raising the general level; and the less satisfactory colleges would have been able to use registration as an advertisement to attract students to whom registration would appear to imply

positive approval. It was thought, too, that Parliament might not be prepared to accept that a Minister should forbid the running of correspondence courses since these were clearly on a different footing from schools where the welfare of children is involved (there is no power to close other independent establishments providing further education). On the other hand, a voluntary accreditation scheme might well provide a better way of achieving the broad objective of raising standards, since recognition by an independent body of high standing would be a strong incentive to colleges to raise their standards. The increasing and long-term effect of the creation of a body of such recognised colleges ought to be that the less worthy and desirable establishments would lose custom and wither. An accrediting body set up by the colleges alone would have little standing but one established with the backing of the Secretary of State would be likely to command a good deal of respect.

After discussions between themselves and with the Department, it was announced in March 1965 that the two main correspondence college associations had agreed to prepare a scheme for the establishment of a national accreditation body of 11 members, of whom the Chairman and 5 other members would be nominated by the Secretary of State. For an initial period of 3 years the ABCC would nominate 3 of the other 5 members and the Cleaver-Hulme group 1, with the 5th member selected by those two groups with the agreement of the Secretary of State. The intention was that this 5th place should be filled by someone representing correspondence college interests other than those of the 2 main groups. After the initial 3-year period, all 5 correspondence college members would be elected by colleges which had secured accreditation.

The Accreditation Council was incorporated under the Companies Acts as a non-profit making company limited by guarantee in September 1968 with the primary duties of accrediting colleges which conform to the standards it sets, raising generally the standards of postal tuition and protecting the interests of both the students and the colleges. Subject to a financial guarantee from the Association of British Correspondence Colleges and Cleaver-Hulme Ltd. to cover its first two years, the Council is expected to be financially self-supporting, obtaining its income from its charges to colleges.

The Council's Articles require it to publish by-laws (i) setting the standards to be attained and maintained by accredited colleges; (ii) laying down the form of application for accreditation and the procedure to be adopted by the Council in coming to a decision on an application; (iii) determining the application fee, and (iv) fixing the annual subscription (to be based on annual gross fee income, as defined) to be paid by accredited colleges. The Council is now engaged in formulating its policy on these matters⁶⁹. It remains to be seen how effective this system of joint control will be. Two substantial non-profit making institutions concerned with correspondence education are not joining the activities

of the Council. The Open University has its own royal charter and requires no further accreditation. The National Extension College, an institution interested in the multi-media approach to education, has always advocated a system of direct inspection by the Department of Education and Science and thus regards the scheme of voluntary accreditation as inadequate.

The Dutch system of control is, pending the passing of the Act of Parliament governing correspondence education, also a voluntary one initiated by the colleges themselves. The *Inspectie van het Schriftelijk Onderwijs* publishes a list of correspondence colleges which are inspected by it "in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Sciences". But just as the Dutch system is moving towards full governmental control of correspondence education standards, so the move in other countries has tended in the same direction.

Public control of correspondence education

The movement towards public control is taking a number of different forms. As already indicated, the ultimate step in the assumption of public control is the exclusive conduct of correspondence education by an agency of government. This is the position in *Turkey*. On the near-side of this position is *France*, where the CNTE works as an agency of the Ministry of Education. Commercial systems are permitted but are not regarded as a relevant part of the educational system.

Next comes the *Norwegian* position. As already indicated, all correspondence colleges have, since 1949, been under the control of a Council for Correspondence Education established by the government. The Act of 1948 establishing this control machinery was amended on 7 February 1969 so as to extend the controlling power of government over correspondence schools and their educational activities. The rules and regulations made in pursuance of the amendment require that correspondence colleges shall no longer be profit-making enterprises and that their estimates and accounts may be called in at any time for inspection and control. The size of the Council for Correspondence Education has been increased to seven members and in addition to its controlling function, the Council has been given the duty to foster and initiate development, experiment and research within the correspondence colleges and in co-operation with other educational authorities and institutions⁷⁰.

A *Danish* Law passed in 1960 "made it possible for correspondence schools voluntarily to submit to State control or State supervision. Ten such schools are today approved by the State, and these have between them about 60 % of the total number of pupils enrolled for correspondence tuition.

State 'control' or supervision involves approval of the pedagogical leadership of the school, its courses, the authors of lessons, teachers, advertisements and information material etc. Supervision of the educational activities of the teachers may be carried out." ⁷¹

In the *Federal Republic of Germany* the devolved control of educational services which has operated since the end of the second world war prevented until recently the establishment of any central organ for supervision of correspondence education. But it is of the nature of correspondence education to cross *Land* boundaries in the Federation. Thus some form of central agency was bound to be required sooner or later. Such an agency is currently being established in Cologne under a treaty entered into by all the federal *Länder* in October 1969. It will be called the Central Office for Education by Correspondence and "will work for the Federal Republic of Germany... it will begin its activities in the middle of the year 1970... The Office has

1. to examine on request and according to paragraph 5 of the agreement the correspondence courses which will be held by institutions having their domicile in one of the contracting *Länder*;
2. to give information on correspondence courses which it has found appropriate;
3. to observe the development of education by correspondence and to promote it by recommendations and suggestions;
4. to advise the *Länder* concerning education by correspondence and examination procedures for participants of such courses." ⁷²

Here, as in Denmark, recognition of correspondence courses is given following voluntary application by the correspondence college concerned. Recognition is extended to individual courses rather than to a college as such. A college wishing to have a course recognised has to submit details of this; details of the type and extent to which correction of students' work is undertaken; where appropriate, details about intermediate and final examinations taken by the students; details of the qualifications, activities and training of authors, tutors, counsellors etc.; details of the contract applicable to students taking the course; and a declaration that the applicant college will notify any alteration in the details submitted and will supply at any time details and returns about the course which may be required by the Office for Correspondence Education ⁷³.

In *Italy* there appears to be no inhibition on the opening and conduct of correspondence colleges. Only three, however, are recognised by the Ministry of Education. It is not clear from the information received whether this recognition implies any specific standard of educational competence or financial probity on the part of the colleges which are so recognised. The *Spanish* system of correspondence education is governed by a general decree of 10 August 1963 concerned with the promotion of adult education among Spaniards. Under article 24 of the decree "the

Office of Further Education is to be responsible for registering correspondence education institutions and controlling their educational standards as well as their technical, economic and organisational soundness." 74

Conclusion

The rapid growth of government intervention in the establishment of control and assessment procedures for correspondence education suggests that the role of such education is changing rapidly. The recognition of the need to provide, as part of the public systems of education, continuing opportunities for education is forcing governments to call in aid the existing institutions of correspondence education and to attempt to harness them to the total national educational effort. As a result an element of polarisation is occurring among the commercial correspondence colleges. The larger and better established are becoming more closely linked with public systems of education; the less capable ones are tending to be forced out of the market.

Unresolved factors in the relation of colleges to public systems are (a) some of their methods of recruitment; and (b) the management of their courses. Here the clash is apparent between systems deriving from unfettered private enterprise and systems in which education is regarded as in a large measure the responsibility of the State. It remains to be seen whether the European or the North American tradition will prevail in this respect.

VI.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The reports from member States show clearly that, in their handling of correspondence education, they fall into three groups. There are those countries in which correspondence education is well established, both academically and institutionally. In these countries a firm basis is present for the development of correspondence education in support of a policy of permanent education.

There are secondly those countries in which correspondence education has until recently played, or is still playing, a marginal role with little public recognition and an institutional framework largely deriving from commercial practice. Here it will take longer to harness correspondence education to the mainstream of educational development, even assuming that it is decided to use it towards this end. The pace at which development proceeds will depend not only on the extent to which the country concerned feels able to solve its educational problems by traditional means but also on the growth of a recognition of educational needs among the adult population which may at present be ignored. It is likely that, as educational demands are made more articulate, the countries concerned will find themselves looking to correspondence education as one of the means of meeting such demand.

The third group of countries are those which are too small to develop institutions of correspondence education for themselves and which therefore rely on provision made by institutions in other countries, mainly those of the same linguistic group. Thus Malta and Cyprus have tended to look to the United Kingdom (with some provision for Cyprus from Greece); Austria has tended to look to Germany; Ireland to the United Kingdom and, though no confirmation of this is available, it is likely that Iceland would look to the Scandinavian countries. The development of correspondence education in these countries will continue to depend largely on the provision available from outside.

But although the three sets of conditions may indicate a country's readiness for the development of correspondence education, they do not themselves establish the case for such development. What, in the light of the assembled information, can be said to be the argument for the energetic pursuit of correspondence education? The answer to such a question can be given only within the context of the socio-economic development which most European countries are experiencing at the present time. This development is well analysed in the French evidence.

The convergence of technical and educational developments

"In the traditional view, correspondence course establishments, just as on-the-spot educational institutions, applied to a clearly defined number of students, enrolled in a specific academic course, itself extending over a given period, and (in *France*) sanctioned as a rule by diplomas, examinations and competitions. The courses, textbooks and study plans were conceived as an organic whole, each segment being of interest only in terms of the entire programme of the establishment and for the students themselves.

The new requirements of an educational system which has extended to include a considerable sector of the adult population — linked with the new methods represented by mass media, together with the new teaching techniques of programmed instruction and dynamic, methodological concepts — tend to be gradually changing this old approach. This is the case, moreover, with traditional educational institutions as well as for youth/adult correspondence course establishments.

(a) Formerly, education concurrently provided knowledge, stimulated individual study and encouraged group work; now correspondence and radio/TV courses have begun to split up these three aspects of pedagogic unity. Knowledge is supplied from afar, and often by sources other than the teacher; individual study is also "remote controlled"; group instruction is carried out by intermediaries. In other words, the means of learning available to a physically isolated student, taking home-study courses, are henceforth similar to those of a self-taught adult, who derives the supplementary training which he feels he needs, from whatever source he can, and on his own initiative. Both can now draw on sources of information which no longer depend exclusively on the teacher, sole distributor of knowledge, nor on the school, sole agency for disseminating learning.

(b) At the same time, the development of pedagogic ideas is promoting a parallel reconciliation of training methods. In place of an authoritative and abstract educational approach, it is tending to introduce more individual methods of study and the use of individually adapted materials. Even in the case of correspondence tuition, a dynamic concept of progression can help effectively, if the student is not only asked to

answer a question or provide a solution, but is also stimulated to put questions himself, to react to a concrete situation, to adapt by using his imagination, in short, to conceive problems, not merely resolve them.

One can imagine didactic methods, still basically centred on the textbook and course content, being gradually replaced by a wider and more flexible use of public sources of information. A more autonomous study method will grow from the documentary and tangible base provided by such sources. The teacher, whose influence will become less direct, although no less essential, will be able to concentrate his attention on those students who have most need of him; in each individual case, he will be able more readily to adapt his approach to their psychology.

There are countless public sources of information nowadays: textual and pictorial, books and posters, newspapers and newsreels, radio and television; these sources must be used, initially as a motivation factor." 75

Mr. Cros, the author of the French contribution, then goes on to identify information as a means of motivation and suggests that "in this motivating role information should be first of all captivating; it should appeal to the imagination as much as to the intellect; it should move more than instruct." 76 And Mr. Cros continues to sketch in in some detail the possible consequences of the communications revolution for the provision of more flexible learning opportunities for the whole range of citizens caught up in a process of continuing change. He concludes that "When this pedagogic development is complete, home studies, whether by correspondence, radio or television, will inevitably be integrated into the broader framework of educational supplies, which implies an overall organisational concept: problems of personalised tuition, apprenticeship methods and programming techniques, preparing and disseminating information and study materials, the revision of school textbooks etc.

The various media prepared by or for correspondence course establishments will become less specific in content as they are aimed increasingly at a wider public, where autodidacts and students merge; by so doing, the media will improve the educational help given by such establishments to their own students in written form, verbally or via the local teacher will on the other hand lose nothing of its specific value." 77

Brave though this view of the future is, it is important to bear in mind that our point of departure is educational systems which are, in the majority of cases, based on quite different, and outdated, assumptions. One of the reasons why forward-looking educators in many countries are taking a new interest in correspondence education is that it is comparatively free from such traditional restraints and political obstacles to development. Those promoting correspondence education have therefore to guard against the danger that advance on their front may leave behind the main sector of the educational system and in this way set up psychological barriers to educational advance on a broad front.

Recent *Swedish* experience furnishes a useful example of a resolute and imaginative effort to prevent the opening up of a divide between the traditional educational system and the new thinking illustrated in French evidence.

Against the background of the development of adult education during the post-war period, and particularly during the sixties, the *Swedish* Government presented a bill in March 1967 with a New Deal for adult education. At the time of writing, this bill has not passed through parliament, but in all probability the broad outlines of the proposal will be accepted. A brief account of it may therefore be worthwhile before going on to more detailed consideration of the new situation thus created in correspondence education.

It should first be noted that the government proposal has come about, not only in response to the actual increase in different types of adult education, but also as a result of an extensive public discussion on educational policy and of extensive investigations. The various committees examining these questions, chiefly those concerned with upper secondary and vocational education, had as a common denominator in their proposals that the formal youth school model should be followed fairly closely, and that the same kind of organisation, curricula and forms of teaching should be adopted as those already existing for formal youth education. These proposals met with fairly severe criticism from certain bodies. This criticism was based on three main points:

- that adults have entirely different requirements, with their own difficulties and their own advantages, which must be taken into account, and would therefore not benefit from the "youth model";

- that experience exists, particularly in the realm of popular education, which the committees have not taken into consideration, but which should be drawn upon in the framing of adult education;

- that a much more flexible arrangement, better adapted to adult education, would be required if the needs of adults, and the national interest, are to be met properly.

After the debate on these reports there were, accordingly, two opposing lines of thought:

- one quite closely following the model of youth schools;

- the other related more to the principles of free popular education, more flexible, more "modern" and "specific" to adult conditions and needs.

Which line would the Ministry of Education and the government choose, the "school-bound" or the "freer and more flexible"?

In developing its interest in correspondence education it is to be hoped, therefore, that the Council of Europe will use its unique position to bridge the gap that might easily emerge between the proponents of

modern teaching/learning systems, and those who are at work in the traditional educational systems throughout Europe. The Council could act as a bridging agent by promoting joint studies and meetings between those responsible for meeting the ever-mounting educational needs of member States and those who have studied the means by which correspondence education and educational technology generally could help to meet these needs at a cost which would be politically acceptable.

Co-ordination of research and development in correspondence education

If the providers of correspondence education are to act as pioneers in the field of continuing education, the *general* level of correspondence education has to be raised to that of the best institutions in the field. To this end the work done by the organisation working at a European level to bring together correspondence institutions needs to be strengthened, and the initiative of COPEC is to be welcomed. But even this is not sufficient. It is no longer realistic to confine membership of either the CEC or the EHSC to commercial correspondence colleges. The work done by public institutions such as the CNTE of France and the Open University of the United Kingdom is setting a pace in the development of correspondence teaching techniques which the commercial colleges must match. It may be that the Council of Europe could help to this end as a governmental agency capable of bringing together the whole range of institutions concerned with correspondence education. Such expressions of view as are contained in the evidence from member States suggest that an initiative of this kind would be welcomed by them.

Indeed one national report pleads for the establishment of a European Institute for Advanced Correspondence Education. The *Norwegian* paper suggests that "The purpose of such an institute would be to make available research and instructional facilities in fields which are of importance for the correspondence schools."⁷⁸ From *Denmark* there is also a plea for more research. "One thing is essential. Research, to which all educational activities and endeavours are indebted and on which they are dependent for their prestige, is something the correspondence schools must still do without. A European or international initiative in this problem would be welcomed in Denmark."⁷⁹

The areas in which research and development are needed are many and various. The *Swedish* evidence sets out a number of these drawn from the work of Dr. B. Holmberg:

- " — the use of more diagnostic tests;
- a reduction of the amount of writing demanded from the student;
- introduction of test questions which stimulate further thinking;
- more detailed and didactic illustrations;
- better typography;
- more use of audio-visual aids;

— programmed instruction inserted in ordinary correspondence courses;

— more stimulus to find out facts from different sources.

Other lines of development which are quite closely related to those presented by Dr. Holmberg are:

— more diagnostic tasks;

— more carefully designed and more detailed study guides;

— increased use of commentary courses based on supplementary material and guides to existing textbooks;

— increased use of complete and varying sets of material.

Finally, a future perspective of how the production should be organised:

— first a clear analysis of goals;

— framing of final examinations on the basis thereof;

— check tasks inserted at frequent intervals;

— teaching material related to the diagnostic tests with, for example, increased facilities for revision tasks;

— elimination of certain material and the like;

— active utilisation of the diagnostic tests for continuous adjustment of parts of the course which prove unsatisfactory;

— more preliminary tests or zero tests to check the student's prior knowledge and general starting position." ⁸⁰

The establishment of common standards in correspondence education

If, as is suggested above, there is likely to take place a convergence of the technical and the educational developments in the next few years throughout member States of the Council of Europe, and if the Council can give an impetus to the joint study of those growth points in correspondence education to which attention has been drawn, the basis for the establishment of commonly accepted standards in this field will emerge.

If, moreover, the idea of continuing education makes headway at the same time, and member States decide to adapt their educational systems so as to enable them to deal with the increased demand for education, this will strengthen the case for the establishment of standards at a European level, against which correspondence education in individual countries can be measured. It is not within the terms of reference of this study to recommend the precise machinery by which such common standards might be achieved. There is no doubt, however, that there is a willingness, among educators in member States, to follow any lead which the Council of Europe may be able to give. The *Spanish* report says: "We believe that there is an urgent need in all countries for laws regulating adult education at every level. Other means or instruments

must be used to give increased weight to the use of correspondence education, which is more workable and effective and becomes increasingly necessary as the anti-illiteracy drive increases the number of people who have acquired the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. We know that in Spain reports and draft projects have been drawn up which could form the basis of a law on out-of-school education viewed as an integral part of general educational policy."⁸¹

One of the difficulties facing anyone attempting to establish standards will be the comprehensive nature of the concept of permanent education. It must be, as has been stressed throughout this study, an integral part of the public educational system. At the same time it extends far beyond the confines, as traditionally conceived, of this system. It takes in, for instance, the mass media; it also includes large areas of training which have traditionally been under the direct control of industry and commerce. As we have seen, it also includes the private sector of correspondence education. This inclusiveness tends to reduce educational planners and legislators to a sense of impotence, in the face of the difficulty of devising, in a free society, a legislative framework for such a new educational concept. In conclusion it may therefore be useful to specify somewhat more precisely what might be the objectives to which further work in this field might be addressed.

In the light of the data now available, what are the problems which face correspondence education and, consequently, what are the best possible plans for the future?

Any answer to this question must take account of the following factors:

- Correspondence education must be included, organisationally speaking, in overall educational planning at every level, in addition to or in place of traditional teaching. It should be provided by the State, either directly or through private bodies encouraged, aided and controlled by the State.

- It should cater for individual students following courses suited to their requirements, their circumstances, their capabilities and their rate of assimilation, or for groups of students led by a tutor acting as intermediary between the correspondence institute and the class.

- With respect to subject matter, correspondence education should, as an instrument of out-of-school education at every level from primary to higher, be geared to:

humanist values and general culture. It should aim to educate the man in the street, who seeks wider horizons than his own special subject. It should seek to form and inform. To achieve this it should, considering the characteristics and needs of our day and age, strive to create a scientific humanism to counter-balance the over-prevalent traditional literary humanism;

theoretical and practical specialisation, preferably directed towards the vocational and technical training of adults.

— With regard to its scope, correspondence education should embrace adult education at popular level and also at increasingly advanced and specialised levels;

geographically, it should be organised, first on a national and then on an international scale, to cater for groups living abroad (e.g. emigrants) who in general speak the same language (as Spain does for all Spanish-speaking countries).

— With regard to the question of status, it is of the utmost importance that correspondence studies should, in addition to being genuinely effective, gain a certain measure of public recognition and esteem. This requires that they should lead to some officially and academically valid qualification.

— With regard to methods, there is an urgent need for a body of teachers specially trained for this type of education, from the point of view of both the psychology of the students (adults at various stages of maturity) and the nature of the system.

A great deal could be gained if in teacher training establishments (particularly Colleges of Education and University Education Departments) and out-of-school educational institutions time was devoted to learning, studying and practising the principles of correspondence education.

Such training should concentrate on the following aspects: planning, presentation, correction and evaluation.

On the other hand, correspondence education must make use of all progressive methods, programmed learning techniques and mass communication media (press, radio, television, records etc.). Printed lessons should be accompanied by appropriate teaching materials (tools, convertible material, mini-labs).

— From the public relations point of view, it is vital for correspondence education to take account of the social needs of the country on the one hand, and, on the other, of the psychology of adult students who, even where culture is concerned, do not lose sight of the pragmatic side of life. Accordingly, correspondence education must foster systematic relations with the firms and employment centres likely to be affected by the branches in which they specialise, so that everyone who obtains a qualification, academic or otherwise, in the various courses may be absorbed into the public or private sector.

If these limited objectives can be reached, much will have been done towards the achievement, in the member States of the Council of Europe, of one of the basic human rights: the right of access for all citizens to educational opportunities suitable to their ages, abilities and aptitudes ⁸².

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